



THE APPEAL TO REALITY

R. EDIS. FAIRBAIRN



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By
R. EDIS. FAIRBAIRN



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FOREWORD

FOR an unintelligent Protestantism there can be no future. No revivalism, however ingenious and psychologically efficient, and scientifically managed, can restore virility to evangelical Christendom. Nothing but a recovery of intelligent conviction can do that. By intelligence I do not mean intellectualism, which is an affectation, but a keenness of mind and strength of effort to examine and deal with truth, which involves hard thinking.

Hard thinking is just about the last thing men are willing to do in connection with religion. Nevertheless, the task of the preacher is to demand of religious people that they shall have examined the basis of their faith, and of nonreligious persons that they shall justify their nonacceptance of Christ.

So far from this effort of mind being dangerous to personal and collective faith, it is exactly the lack of this which causes religion to wilt and decay, and by cause of which Christianity recovers its disciple enthusiasm.

These are some of the things which wish to be uttered, and which the writer has earnestly labored to utter. If these thoughts find echo in other and more competent minds, no apology is needed for his effort.

R. EDIS. FAIRBAIRN.

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RELIGION AND THE NEW REALISM

THERE is really no such thing as the modern mind, if by that is meant a tendency represented by preponderating numbers. There are so many confused and conflicting currents in the stream of the world's thinking that it would be impossible to say which predominates. But if one is concerned for the effective mind of the times, the tendency which has made the modern world what it is, then the modern mind is a new realism.

This is not so much a philosophy as a method, and not so much a method as a spirit. Ideally, it is the resolute and complete recognition of the authority of fact for thought. It is a conscious and courageous loyalty to reality. It is the admission that, however our conceptions may be conditioned by our power of conceiving, reality is not the seeing but the seen. Reality is there, confronting us, and we have to acknowledge its authority and come to terms with it.

Like all things that are at once real and really new, it has its roots in the ancient past. It is perhaps only new to this extent,

that we are becoming fully conscious of its implications. Roger Bacon glimpsed it in the thirteenth century when he recommended philosophers and theologians alike to turn their attention from disquisition to inquisition. Lord Bacon expressed it in his *Novum Organum*. Newton applied it in his discovery of the law of gravitation. The achievements of modern science are the harvest to date of its fruitage.

The old sciences proceeded by means of much meditation upon indifferent observation. When one considers how flimsy was the foundation, the guesswork constructions are remarkable. But the new method, stressing observation painstaking, accurate, and prolonged, with hypothesis only as the glow-lamp to show the way to experiment and the apprehension of further fact, so changed the face of things that the old sciences became totally discredited. They were so damaged that even their names had to go into oblivion with them. Astrology became astronomy, and alchemy, chemistry. Men came to realize that the only way to learn of nature is to sit at her feet in humble attention.

It was not an easy lesson to learn. In many respects men have not yet mastered it.

It is old enough now to have a vast area of accomplishment to its credit, but new enough to be still strange to the ordinary man. It has given us, with all that modern science involves, a new type of literature, a new kind of education, and a new trend in politics. It is also responsible for a new orientation in religion. Orthodoxy struggled fiercely and long against its intrusion, yielding ground stubbornly, and by the sheer pressure of overwhelming force steadily applied. Even now the mass of popular religion remains aggressively innocent of its infection. But the theological colleges generally have come to terms with it, and to that extent it may be said to have won its place.

Religion, where it is effectively intelligent, having accepted peace terms and reckoned up its gains and losses, has developed a surprising cheerfulness. Having learned to manipulate the weapon from which it suffered, it has turned it against the unbelieving world, challenging men in the name of faith to give an account of themselves and show cause why they are not religious. That, in brief, is the situation presented by the relations between religion and the new realism.

The old, unhappy days have gone when

"Genesis or Geology" was the signal that never failed to start a theological riot. It was inevitable that men who recognized the validity of the story graven on the rocks and in the very structure of living things should heed the writing of God they found there more than the groping guesses of primitive man, who had never seen that divine script, and could not have read it if he had.

So heartily has the principle of reality as the sole authority been accepted by religious thinkers that they have not hesitated to apply it in a fresh and fearless interpretation of the Bible. That brought about the modern critical conception. The fearful and obscurantist still cry, "Why not take the Bible just as it stands?" The progressives reply, "That is exactly what we do." The willingness to look at the Scriptures just as they are, without attempting to force upon them any theory of inspiration, has resulted in the frank recognition of the thoroughly human character of their form, together with something like a soul of divine revelation evolving through its history.

A corresponding theological change is in progress. Once men felt that it was absolutely essential for the preservation of the

faith that they should be panoplied with a philosophy of religion that exhibited at large and in detail the nature and inner relations of the Godhead, Providence, eschatology, Christology, and all the rest. But now they are content to be cheerfully agnostic on many points on which their fathers were dogmatically certain. They are ready to plunge into the sea of life's contingencies if only they may lash themselves fast to life's buoyant realities, among which stand pre-eminent the historic Christ and the personal Christian experience.

Now, the Christian indictment of the modern world is just this, that it is not modern enough. It is not charged against men that they will no longer bow to the arbitrary authority of church or Bible, but that they will not carry out with courage and consistency the modern spirit of loyalty to reality. That is only to say that Christianity is resuming its ancient and proper place as the monitor of the world's conscience. It is re-echoing the challenge of Christ, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

With a new vigor and a new courtesy and possibly with the characteristically fervent zeal of the recent convert, Christianity re-

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peats its anathema upon rationalism. Not because rationalism insists upon the exercise of reason, but because it insists upon exercising reason in an arbitrary and superstitious way. Just as the churches once refused to look at geology lest they should see evolution, so rationalism refuses to gaze steadily at reality lest it should see religion. For, to repeat our definition, realism stands for the primacy of reality, of objectivity, and its demand that our thinking shall obey and not command life. But rationalism, if it mean anything, insists that the reasoning process is supreme, and has the right to say what it will and will not operate upon. If realism represents the "given," rationalism represents the "taken." So rationalism is literally and precisely and by strict derivation the modern "heresy." It is the repudiation of the modern mind.

This is strikingly illustrated in the history of psychic research. That was not a contest between religion and science but a domestic controversy within science itself. The subject was banned ostensibly because of the disgusting charlatanry connected with it, but more really because the prevailing rationalistic temper of scientists resented any intru-

sion into the materialistic universe which they had just swept, if not garnished. A few men of courageous curiosity with a conscience for reality looked and listened and recorded, though in so doing they risked their reputation as serious scientists. It cannot be said that the scientific world has surrendered to the claims of even the most respected investigators in this field, much less to the postulates of spiritism. But it does look as though materialism had definitely found its place in the discard.

The reluctance of orthodox science to admit the genuineness of any psychic phenomenon was due to the fact that it did not like the direction taken by this untrodden path. Candid minds could not but see that once they had admitted the psychic they had tacitly acknowledged at least the possibility of the supernatural. As the intellectual objection to religion reduces to one principle, and that the repudiation of the supernatural, it is obvious that if that objection be invalidated in any one instance, the walls of intellectual unbelief are breached. Waiving the appeal to any authority, or even to spiritual intuition, the assertion of Christianity is that whoever will face the realities of life,

with the resolution to see what is there and adjust himself to what he sees, will be compelled by the logic of life not only to acknowledge the truth of religion, which is a small matter, but to be religious, which is not.

Of course it will always be possible for anyone who refuses to see the kind of reality he does not like, to excogitate the most plausible alternative universe, and persuade himself that it is the only possible one. Or he may fall back upon the demurrer that religion, if it is to command credence, must give demonstration of an irresistible sort. Maeterlinck argues this position. Speaking of the "positive religions," he says, "Not one of them brings us a proof before which an honest intelligence can bow. Nor would it suffice if that intelligence were able to bow; for him lawfully to believe, and thus to limit his endless seeking, the proof would need to be irresistible."¹

This naïve demand for irresistible demonstration is, however, not so much an indictment of religion, positive or otherwise, as it is a criticism of the established methods of science. The scientific method is not one of "bowing" before absolute certainty at all, but

¹ *Our Eternity*. p. 28.

the earnest following up of probability. The truly scientific mind recognizes that there is almost no "absolute certainty" whatever, apart from the personal experiences of which we are each immediately conscious. Everything else is matter of a higher or lower degree of probability. What justification is there for the demand that we must have religion, if at all, in an entirely different way from that by which we receive truth valuable for life in any other realm? That may be the demand of rationalism, but it certainly has not the sanction of science.

There can be no discovery of truth valid for life unless men will refrain from the attempt to impose their predilections upon the universe. They must bring the whole force of their intelligent attention to bear in the endeavor to see clearly what is, and then to harmonize their thinking and activities therewith.

Now see how this applies to the historical basis of Christianity. The emergence of that greatest of religious movements is naturally and sufficiently accounted for as the result of the impact upon the life of the world of a mighty and unique personality. It cannot reasonably be explained in any other way.

But the element of the supernatural is inextricably bound up with the personality and actions and words of Christ. The immense weight of natural probability indicates that the accounts given in the Christian documents must be substantially true. But that does not suit a world which has made up its mind on *a priori* grounds that there is no supernatural. Endeavors were made therefore, to excise the "super" from the story and leave the "natural." They were foredoomed. Then men proposed to dismiss the whole thing on the ground that the Gospels do not club the mind into assent with an irresistible demonstration. But it would not be dismissed. Finally the more logical spirits took their courage in both hands and carried their rationalism up to its culmination—which was also its *reductio ad absurdum*—in the blank denial that there ever existed any historical person called Jesus Christ.

All this was very heroic, with the heroism of the Arab dervish flinging himself upon the guns of European soldiers. Splendid, but futile! A belief in invulnerability is severely handicapped against modern artillery. Nor can fanatical rationalism maintain itself against the remorseless pressure of reality.

Is it not time that men, Christian and unbelieving alike, turned afresh with attention and interest to the historical basis of the gospel? Have not the churches been of late unduly timid, and the rest of men unduly dubious in this regard? *Pace* the aforesaid logical rationalists, Christendom is not the product of any "tendency" of Jewish or other cults but the inevitable product of potent fact. However startling the content of the gospel, it must be dealt with and not dismissed. The choice is between the acceptance of the highly probable, which brings with it the sublimation of life, and the formulation of the least incredible within the artificial bounds set by rationalism.

The fact of Christ is one of the most potent data of history. It stands in the past, but it has not passed. Occurring in the yesterday, it is involved in the tissue and substance of human life to-day and forever. Is it not just this sense of being confronted by objective spiritual reality in an actual person and events, above and beyond our subjective spiritual aspirations, that is urgently required, if the world is to be delivered from its hypochondria, and the church from its psychasthenia? Religious people have been weakly

stressing the appeal to spiritual intuition and emotion, with a semiconscious feeling of the insecurity of the gospel narrative. But spiritual intuition cannot operate in a vacuum. It is only an instrument for use upon life and what life presents. Whatever a hidebound and essentially superstitious rationalism may say, the fact of Christ in history is still, for those willing to let reality be what it may and say what it will, an invasion of our world by divine reality.

THE PREJUDICE FOR REALITY

WHILE etymologically it is exactly correct, in its customary usage, involving always a bad sense, "prejudice" is not the right word. But there is no other which can express the special idea. Prepossession, preference, instinct, are all too weak. They do not carry the context of an intelligent purpose, consciously adopted and elevated to the rank of a habit of mind. This the word "prejudice" does. Consider its structure. The prefix suggests that which has been before accomplished, and stands as an established fact. The rest of the word is akin to "judicial," which implies the examination of a case and the pronouncement of a verdict. There is nothing about the word to confine the verdict always to condemnation. It is a pity that it has come to mean only adverse verdicts. But it is a calamity that, instead of implying the sober act of the mind, it is used only to indicate blind, unreasoning partiality ignoring both sense and reason. Structurally, and for the purposes of present discussion, "prejudice" signifies a definite judgment arrived

at, fixed as a personal statute, and carried around for application in the common activities of life, as the carpenter carries around his foot rule. In fact, the carpenter's rule is precisely a prejudice in this sense. It is a judgment of size, prepared as a standard of measurement.

The person who loudly boasts of his freedom from prejudices is often painfully correct. He has no established judgments of moral value. But whoever has no proper prejudices is something less than a man. No religious person can be other than violently prejudiced. Jesus Christ is the supreme example. That was why he could not stand those Pharisees. And what is it but a specification of the prejudices of the Almighty when the Scripture says, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil"?

The function of education may be said to be the creation of sound prejudices. Unless the teacher can implant in the mind of the pupil certain mental and moral standards, no amount of mere knowledge will constitute a person educated. That there has been a measure of failure in regard to the moral side

of education is suggested by the efforts being made at the present time to secure increased efficiency at this point. The truly educated man has not to stop at every juncture to ask himself what is good or true or beautiful. He has established automatic reflexes in his mind, which, like the physical reflexes of the spinal column, act immediately and without conscious effort, just as the skilled auto driver manipulates his levers and pedals without conscious volition, though at first he bungled over them confusedly.

The word "reality" also needs defining for our purpose, because, especially among religious people, it often stands for sincerity and earnestness. Here it must mean much more than that. It represents that which is real, the world of things-as-they-are. Reality may not be what we imagine it. (That by way of a sop to the philosophers.) But however illusory our conception of it, reality is what it is, and it must be sought and dealt with as it is. All prosperity and progress, all science and religion, depend upon our discovery of and faithful dealing with reality. The will to seek reality, the willingness to let reality be what it may, whether that accord with our desires or not, and the purpose to align our-

selves with reality when we see it—nothing is more urgently needed by this war-racked, strife-torn, confused old world. But this is a surprisingly difficult business for human nature, which is prone to expect truth to be according to predilections, and frequently finds it to be so, when it is not so at all. The scientific spirit of detachment, so exasperating to the lay mind, is really a magnificent achievement in this direction. It is not that the scientist does not care what the truth may turn out to be, but that he cares so much for the truth that he will not allow any prepossession of his own to warp his judgment. He certainly has the prejudice for reality, a stubborn, disciplined habit of mind, concerned to see and know just what is there, in the world of matter and mind.

But while the scientist has developed a loyalty to reality in the sphere of his special interest, he sometimes fails like an ordinary human being to apply it in the other departments of life. The materialist scientist discussing religion is often a painful example of inconsistency with the scientific method. But, in fact, most of us are prone to this sin. We have, at the best of times, but a partial sense of truth. Along certain lines we follow

it with instinctive faithfulness; off those particular tracks we blunder and wander pitifully. That is why loyalty to reality needs to be inculcated as a universal principle, as an ingrained prejudice. There are no such pernicious lies as those which depend upon half-truths. Have not all the great controversies of history exemplified that? If in these days contention is losing something of acerbity, that is not because men are less passionately in earnest about the truth, nor because they are oppressed by a feeling of truth's complexity. Such a sense of the many-sidedness of things in general may produce a cowardly paralysis in the mind, which is very far from an admirable spirit of toleration. It is, rather, because the sense of reality is growing in the world. There is more disposition to acknowledge the immensity of our ignorance, and a consequent consensus upon that of which we can be reasonably sure. But this loyalty to reality must evolve much further to meet the needs of this time of reconstruction.

We have heard substantial men of affairs, like the banker and merchant class, accustomed to utter their views in a tone of conscious authority, deliver themselves of inane

drivel on the subject of the industrial unrest of our time. Conversely, we have heard intelligent artisans talk pitiful twaddle about the employing class generally. We are sure that nothing but continued friction, with the possibility of grave social disturbance, can come out of such attitudes of stupid hostility. We are also sure that no solution can begin to solve our industrial problems which does not begin with the creation of a general will to see all the truth. Again we say that this is no easy prescription for human nature to swallow. It is so difficult for the average man to make an effort of this kind that nothing short of a religious consecration to reality could bring him to it.

Believers in democracy have to face a disturbing phenomenon to-day in the growing lack of confidence in Parliaments and regular legislative methods. The public is losing faith, if not in the actual honesty of legislators, at any rate in their ability to keep out of the clutches of the big interests. Legislators have never yet functioned consciously and purposefully for the welfare of the people at large, in spite of all their noble declamation at election times. That is, rather, the far-off ideal. Before the Great War, how-

ever, there was steady progress in the direction of legislative reality against serious obstacles. Whenever legislators or the public mind develop a new conscience for reality, there will be renewed efforts in this direction.

Religion, for its part, has nothing to lose, but everything to gain, by an increased sensitiveness to reality, meaning by this, let us repeat, not mere sincerity or earnestness, but a feeling for actuality and the fitness of things. There has been a tendency to suppose that spirituality was somehow independent of facts, almost incongruous with them. It appears strongly in Browning's "Death in the Desert," which urges that the gospel, once launched in the world, can waive all questions of its origin and credentials as irrelevant. But the gospel can never cease to stand upon its historical basis. Without a recognition of that connection with reality, Christianity is apt to decline upon a pious sentimentalism. No campaign, however ingeniously and energetically efficient its program, can make the church what it ought to be if it does not bring to birth in individuals a new sense of the solemn and immediate fact of God and the objective reality of Christ.

The peril inherent in all religious campaigns is just that they succeed in stirring men mightily from without, but fail to create the inner will and initiative that will continue not by momentum of the external push, but from inner living purpose.

Of course there is a good deal in religious life as it exists in the churches with which a robust sense of reality could not feel at home. This is manifest when one pays intelligent attention to our hymns. The great old hymns must be preserved. But no normal man, living a man's life and doing a man's work in the world, can honestly sing the rhapsodies of, say, a St. Anne de Bourignon. Nor does any healthy-minded person express with sincerity a longing to depart this life. It is a handicap to religious progress among the men and women of to-day that we have so many hymns which cannot be sung without much worrying mental accommodation, and so few which express the splendid vision of modern discipleship and outlook.

That mere devotion without the stabilizing control of reality may be in effect a peril to religion is clearly seen in the case of the many fanatical sects. The sincerity of their adherents is undeniable. They all appeal to

the Bible, usually with a bellicose assertion of its verbal infallibility. Yet they feel free to force all sorts of unwarranted interpretations upon Scripture to suit their peculiar notions. The same thing is true in principle of the many quasi-religious cults. No one could be influenced by them who had developed anything like an appreciation of reality.

Epoch-making developments always take men unawares. The day of the Lord always comes like a thief in the night. God's operations always startle us by their unexpectedness of manner and method. Even those who might be supposed to be most wideawake to religious principles are often antagonized by new and fruitful movements because they are unable to see the precious reality in the uncouth form. Why should it be so? A pregnant saying of Scripture gives the answer. Those who fail to see the finger of God in contemporary happenings do so, now as anciently, "because they received not the love of the truth." They had not developed the instinct for reality as such. This does not come "by nature"; it must always be "received." We inherit or absorb prepossessions and partialities. We are at their mercy unless we

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consciously and purposefully adopt and cultivate the sense of the real, of what Is, even though reality disturb us. The antidote for all crippling and blinding prepossessions is in a conscious and purposive prejudice, the prejudice for reality.

THE REALIZATION OF GOD

PERSONAL experience is the soul of religion, and the realization of God is the soul of personal experience. Whatever propaganda may accomplish in the increase of the religious constituency and the extension of its organization, it does worse than fail if it does not help to create the realization of God in the soul of individuals. It accumulates an inert mass lying across the path of any genuine revival.

The religious value of a community must be reckoned, not by the membership roll or visiting list of its churches, but by the number of those for whom God has become real. For only such have energy to contribute to the cause of the Kingdom. The rest are absorbers. Some, indeed, are leaks. Unless Christendom can develop strongly in this direction it is likely to be overborne by the present situation rather than to advance through the present opportunity. Seers and prophets we must have. But outstanding men do not make history except as they help the people to see and choose and achieve for themselves.

The men of mark in religious history are those who, on their own initiative, pressed through the crust of things to the inner reality. They sought God, and ceased not to travail until they found him. They were not dependent upon any organized movement. We are not slack to give credit to environmental influence as a factor in conversion. But above and beyond that there must be personal striving to enter the Kingdom. Epochal revivals are not so much due to one man's work, however consecrated. They come because there is a realization on the part of many of the common people of their soul-famine, and a resurgence of the soul's desire for God. Conceivably the prophet may be the product of his age's felt need of God, as well as the bearer of the delivering word. Does not God work through mankind as well as through men? Whatever be our philosophy of it, there *are* tides and relaxations and awakenings in the collective soul of mankind.

The one thing essential in religion is that God shall have become real to the soul of men. It is worth while to think out just what that involves. We are so apt to be hypnotized by our familiarity with phrases. Before things can become real they must first

have been strange. That is why the most vital faith arises out of strenuous doubt. The most alarming symptom of religious trouble is that the gospel does not surprise and shock people.

The difference between a religion of acquiescence and one of robust reality is the difference between the feeling that is engendered in us by a picture on the one hand and by actuality on the other. It may be observed faintly in connection with a pictured sunset and the actual glowing west. It may be seen vividly in the contrast between a picture of someone drowning and an actual incident. The picture moves us all the more if it portray a historical incident like the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Real emotion is produced but, of course, no action. In the presence of actuality, however, we are so moved that we are unconscious of emotion as such; we are conscious only of the urge to action. If we can do nothing ourselves, we seek help. Far too much religion consists in being moved as pictures move us; far too little in a first-hand contact with reality. God must become real to us. He must become a fact, *the* great fact, in order that he may become the prime factor in our lives.

I was interested once in the remark of a lady in a company which was discussing the value of religious services. She averred in a confident and slightly aggressive tone that certain great music did her far more good than the finest sermon she ever heard. I professed gladness that she found benefit from the music, but said I believed she was mistaken in supposing that the aim of sermons was to "do people good." On inquiry as to what she meant by the "good" which she found in the music rather than in the preaching, it appeared, as I had surmised, that she had certain pleasurable emotions reproduced in her. And this is, of course, what music does. In fact, this is all that music can do. It is well known that the initial effect of certain drugs creates a similar mental exaltation. One may also observe a reaction into irritability alike after musical exaltation and after alcoholic uplift. Indeed, professional musicians are notoriously and chronically temperamental. Well, it is conceivable that certain types of services may, for certain types of persons, compare unfavorably with music, pictures, poetry, or any other form of art, as emotion stimulants. But services are not held to make people feel

good, but to rouse the soul to action. I am far from saying that they ought not to stir emotion. That is both inevitable and necessary, but as a condition and not as an end. If they do no more than that, they would have the value only of a spiritual drug.

The widespread notion that religion consists in religious feeling is one pernicious heresy. It is keeping out of pledged church fellowship many of the very type of men and women the church most needs. It has been drilled into them from childhood that an emotional tempest is an essential accompaniment of conversion, and that lacking such violent transformation they could not be regarded as regenerate, however loyal they might be to Christ as Lord. The realization of God is an experience not without its own great emotions, but they come, as all healthy emotion comes, as a by-product of life.

The modern term for this experience of God is "mysticism." That is, in my opinion, an unfortunate word, except, maybe, for technical use. It suggests an ecstasy out of relation with life, and all history shows that such religion is morbid. Let it be freely conceded that God becomes real for different persons in various ways. Any way, artistic, so-

cial, theological, intellectual, may be valid. All are spiritual if they are spiritually effective. Brother Lawrence, who laid Christendom under obligation by his devotional writings, collected under the title *The Practice of the Presence of God*, found God through the familiar but previously unremarked spectacle of an almond tree bursting into bloom in the early spring. Kepler realized God as he scanned the starry heavens.

Similarly, different things may hinder the realization of God in different people. The kind of service that brought converts in crowds years ago fails, on the testimony of experienced evangelists, to affect many today. People are too sophisticated; they can see the wheels working; they watch the revivalist's expert methods rather than listen to his message. It is indeed impossible by any mere methods to make men realize God. That requires a personal going-forth in the venture of faith. What makes me uneasy in view of mere revivalism is the comparative facility with which persons may be impressed and moved and captured without starting in them this personal activity. The Kingdom is still to be gone out after and forcibly captured. Is not that what the Lord meant

when he said: "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." The day of religion by external pressure, whether of the law's command, or of prophetic exhortation, had been outgrown. The new, freer, and higher life introduced by the gospel requires that everyone who desires it shall enter his own name at the gate and fight his way in, like the warrior shown to Christian at the House of the Interpreter in Bunyan's allegory.

I believe I speak for many when I deprecate certain forms of religious propaganda, not from any conceit of cold culture, but out of jealousy for the evangelical experience itself. I urge the necessity of the modern outlook in religious thinking, not because it is intellectually superior, but because only through it can the modern man and woman enter into a vivid and valid experience of God.

Of course, not all are modern who are contemporary. While recognizing that the larger part of mankind is not interested in the intellectual, I see that more and more people are becoming intellectually active and competent—critical in the true sense of that

much-abused word, as being practiced in forming sound judgments for themselves.

Let there be a clear issue here. The religious experience is not, and cannot be, a matter of conviction alone, however sound. Still less is it matter of theological, philosophical, or scientific orthodoxy. Nevertheless, for the educated person it must rise out of these and be harmoniously related to them.

If the background of preaching in general be tinged with intellectual unreality, those who prize intellectual candor will be repelled. I would register my belief, most modestly and least invidiously, that a seriously large proportion of the thinking public is so repelled.

We cannot manipulate men into the realization of God. We are hard put to it to help them to win through for themselves. But we can at least avoid hindering them.

There is only a surface contradiction between this principle of the necessary personal effort to realize God, and the modern emphasis upon educational evangelism. It is quite true that the normal way of religious development is continuous, so that conversion should be as natural as the opening of the flowers. But it is equally true that the finest educational program, together with the most

emotional of old-fashioned preaching, is unable to carry the soul beyond a certain point on the road to the realization of God. Religious education can never dispense with the need for personal religious enterprise. At the utmost it is only the most natural and efficient way of inspiring it.

One of the things which preaching can do, and one of the things that most needs doing, is to correct the expectation of how the realization of God comes about. If men are looking for the semimiraculous, they are likely to look long, and then be disappointed, since not more than a small percentage of us are psychics. Even if we could all be guaranteed some startling manifestation, it would be under the suspicion and uncertainty attaching to all psychic phenomena, in that we could never be sure whether it was a product of subjective processes, or of objectively real forces.

But it is also true that the realization of God is something other than those great experiences of the soul that have occurred so frequently in the past that they have come to be looked upon as standard and requisite, namely, conviction of sin, justification by faith, sanctification, etc. After all, these are

only terms describing the content of salvation. They may or may not be distinct in the conscious experience of the individual. One or other, or all of them, have been absent from the conscious life of men whom Christendom respects as worthy if not perfect Christians.

For God to become real means just what is involved when anything becomes real to us. We become *aware* of what was *there* all the time. We enter into relations with it. Only that is real to us with which we have definite relations. We find him to be *there*, confronting us. More, we find him to be *here*, with us. We depend upon him, just as physically we depend upon nature. This awareness of God develops as we pursue the ordinary business of life in the right spiritual attitude. It may, of course, appear suddenly, when one wrenches himself from sinful ways, and turns in humble acceptance to the will of God. But for those who have never strayed far from the Kingdom it usually comes like the dawn. "It comes and it is there." What Christ does for us is to bring us into that right attitude of soul through his call upon us for allegiance to his person and cause. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." But it

is the will of Christ to reveal God to every man willing to become his disciple.

The path of loyal service to Christ is the straight road, and also the short cut, to the personal realization of God. It is true that some may, like John Wesley, before his heart was "strangely warmed," follow faithfully and diligently, albeit painfully, without finding the liberty and thrill of the sonship life. Nevertheless that life is our right and privilege.

What may elude us in life's dust and stress, and what we may fail to experience even while in an atmosphere of spiritual fervor, we may infallibly find in the solitude of our own soul, if we will retire thereinto and make ourselves responsive to the great Soul of the Universe. Do we not talk far too much to God without giving him a chance to reply? Pray—yes! But listen also. No one can fail to realize God, though feebly at first maybe, who will cease to resist him, will call upon him, holding open the doors of the soul in welcome.

The sense of God may be awakened within us in such solitary exploration, but it is not confined thereto. It is the man who has so found God, however, who is able to worship

unitedly, and he only. And it is the man who knows this "secret place of the Most High" who will be able to tread the dusty street, and engage in common affairs, and at the same time serve the ends of the Kingdom with spiritual efficiency.

THE BASIS OF FAITH

LIKE all very familiar terms, faith needs clear and emphatic definition. To employ a phrase used by Oliver Wendell Holmes, it must be "depolarized" before we can begin to discuss its content. Otherwise we are more than likely to become sidetracked in the course of our thinking, and so fail to arrive at any valid conclusion; for there are few ideas held so loosely and encircled by such thought-forbidding associations as this.

The very conservatism which preserves religious belief as one of the most valuable of human assets tends to obstruct all attempts at reconstruction when the popular belief has ceased to have any coercive power over intelligence. Still, it would seem that there were never so many people who desire to have a faith which is valid for intelligence as now. This should be cause for rejoicing with all who seek the progress of Christianity.

Faith, as the writer conceives it, may be defined as "response to conviction." Like all verbal formulæ, this appears lifeless and artificial until it is brought into relation with

the facts, and the qualifications latent in it perceived. Happily we may dispose of the first element in it quickly, for evangelical Christianity the world over admits that saving faith is no mere adherence to a creed, but the adjustment of the whole man to the moral challenge of the gospel. Our chief concern is with the second term, namely, that which challenges the capacity for faith, and induces the personal response. Let us call this conviction in order to distinguish it from opinion. Let us mean by it the overwhelming consciousness of objective reality with its demand for action. In this view ideas have the value of convictions for us only when they transcend the order of opinions which we hold, and become perceptions of fact which hold us.

There is an analogy between this antithesis of conviction and opinion and the psychological terms "perception" and "idea." A perception may be defined as the result in consciousness of a stimulus produced by something objectively present. But an idea is the remembrance or reproduction of a perception called up in consciousness without the presence of a corresponding objective fact. So the idea is much less potent than

the perception as a motive to action. The perception is of felt reality; the idea is only a picture. Similarly, the faith which is founded upon conviction immediately perceives spiritual reality and is swept along thereby as by an irresistible tidal wave. The facts of the spiritual realm stand staring in upon us and cannot be ignored. But the faith which is not so founded upon conviction takes its beliefs on trust and at second hand, and in the nature of things cannot be so potent as the driving force of the religious life. In fact, it is not faith at all, but mere credence. Its comparative futility is demonstrated in the average type of character it produces, which may be most sincere, but by any real test is found spiritually debilitated. Conviction gives to faith its "categorical imperative." Unfortunately, much popular religion is built upon opinion, whether that be given in authority, tradition, or convention. We will not dispute its claim to whatever value it may have. But it may be affirmed that, apart from the element of personal and intelligent conviction, religion is, at the worst, nothing less than superstition, and at its best nothing more than æstheticism.

The plain fact is that most people do not

know why they are religious. We do not demand that every person should be able to vindicate faith in syllogistic forms. That would be a small matter. The serious thing is that they have drifted into a state of passive acquiescence in the forms, ideas, and sentiments of religion, without any inquiry into the nature of their relation to actuality. It cannot be denied that religion, even in this lame form, has commendable points. It is intimately connected with the social virtues; it is poetic; it is philanthropic, in a way. But it is found wanting in two respects. It is unable to effect that liberation of the spirit and its enfranchisement in the kingdom of God, which constitutes at once the *raison d'être* and the claim of the gospel. Nor can it provide the rock to which men may anchor their souls and safely ride out the storms of life at those times when the fountains of the great deep seem to be broken up; when neither sun nor stars appear for many days, and the swirling tempest throws the forlorn mariner quite out of his reckoning. At such times—and they do come in every life—those whose faith has been of the easy-going, sentimental type discover its futility and too often discard it. Well for them if through such

experiences they discover that their beliefs, all told, have never amounted to faith! No religion can meet the needs of the soul save that which grasps spiritual verities as firmly and consciously as one grasps the hand of a friend, which by its intensity defies the brute force of temptation, and by its simplicity eludes the subtly disintegrating atmosphere of the world.

But though the poverty of the popular religion may appear only in the crises of experience, it nevertheless reacts insidiously and disastrously through the whole of life. What though the sense of sin and need for the divine forgiveness be kept alive, if that be not but preliminary to the development of moral fiber and the habit of righteousness, upon which alone God can look with positive satisfaction? It is true that much worship, public and private, ascends to the Throne, if worship be the paying of compliments, never so sincere, to the Almighty. But will the divine reception of it be other than that reported by Isaiah, "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them"? Religion is often either an æsthetic hobby, an irksome duty, or a kind of insurance. Rare

is the man whose religion, instead of being a part of the burden of life, is an inspiration, quickening his step and giving exuberance to his spirit, staying his soul on the divine certainties in the midst of this changeful world. But such an one can say, not with the pathetic tone of an overwhelmed soul still faintly longing when hope has been quenched, but conscious that he grasps the hand of Deity, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." Will anyone say that less than this can be worthy of the gospel of the incarnate God? Or can any other cause be assigned for religious debility among sincere people than the absence of a basis in intelligent conviction?

Other explanations are certainly proffered: whether they are adequate, investigation should show.

The first and most frequent is that men do not "accept" and "believe" the gospel offered them, and therefore cannot have the gospel experience. This is the explanation usually given by those who conceive faith and reason to be incongruous. Behind it is the unexpressed notion that, since God has been at so much trouble to elaborate a scheme of salva-

tion, he will be offended if men turn a critical eye upon it, but propitious if they humbly accept it and fervently praise it. We do not say that men cannot become religious in this fashion. But we do assert that the fruit which the gospel seeks cannot be grown on that kind of soil. Many are able to accept a sentimental religion on a basis of arbitrary authority, but there are also many—and their number grows apace—who find it impossible to “accept” the gospel for the simple reason that to them it does not represent objective reality. In such case, for them to silence their reason in order mechanically to “accept” a “plan of salvation” would be immoral—if it were possible.

Christianity originated in historical facts, and not in abstract principles. Now, as in the beginning, the Christian faith can be produced only by the Christian facts. Nor can any amount of spiritual or æsthetic beauty, or any kind of authority, take the place of facts for faith. The moral beauty of the gospel story may possess wonderful attraction for those already spiritual enough to appreciate it. The authority of the Bible may be all-sufficient for those who have never questioned it. But these things entirely lack driv-

ing force for the unspiritual, the ignorant, and the degraded.

Christianity succeeds where other world religions fail because, if it be true, it is the story of how *eternal spiritual principles were translated into concrete historical facts*, and so made visible and intelligible. The Word was made flesh. The person of Jesus Christ incarnates the love of God, else an abstract principle. The things which he suffered at the hands of men demonstrate as no fiery prophet or weeping evangelist ever could the inherent iniquity of sin. Calvary becomes for all time the screen upon which is projected the picture of God's attitude to sinners and their reaction to his love. When once a man sees this, he must do one of two things: either believe and be saved, or disbelieve and be damned. But this spiritual challenge, and the crisis in the inner life which it evokes, cannot be produced either by abstract reasoning or by any appeal to sentiment. It is the result in consciousness of the perception of spiritual fact. It would be better, therefore, for those who talk so much of the sin of not "accepting" the gospel to learn to present the facts before intelligence so as to commend them as veritable. At any rate, it is a con-

fession of ineptitude for a preacher to charge those with moral fault whose sense of reality forbids them to "accept" his message.

Again, it is urged in explanation of the feebleness of religion that Christians do not believe *enough* in the gospel. In a sense that is true. But it surely implies a fundamental misconception of faith to speak as though one could adjust the tension by any act of will. Those who reflect at all upon their own spiritual processes are conscious enough of the futility of "trying to believe." Anyone familiar with the work of the inquiry room at a revival knows how difficult it is for the average penitent to exercise the abstract belief which is so often required of him. The same difficulty confronts the invalid Christian seeking by "naked faith" the more advanced "blessings of salvation." There is something very pathetic in the spectacle of a roomful of earnest Christians "exercising faith" for a revival. How often has the disciples' prayer, "Lord, increase our faith!" been repeated under the impression that it is as efficacious as the Lord's Prayer! It is not noticed that, although Christ does not directly chide them for foolishness, he yet gives them to understand that they miscon-

ceive faith altogether. "If ye *had* faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree," etc. Like character, faith is a by-product of action. It cannot be imparted even by God himself. Neither can it be intensified as one tightens the grip of the hand, or screws up a spring, but only indirectly, as one cultivates the conviction which is alone able to generate it.

We all know the kind of person who is sure that the dearth of spiritual power in the churches is due to the fact that they do not sufficiently stress some particular doctrine of theology, such as the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. This notion also has a modicum of truth in it. But the trouble is at once more superficial and more profound. It is not that religious people do not sufficiently believe the special doctrines of the gospel, but that they do not believe enough in the reality of God. They are not sure of God because they have not felt his challenge through objective fact. Their conception of him does not amount to a conviction. If this fundamental conviction of the reality of God is lacking in vividness, no amount or kind of special dogma can do more than galvanize into artificial and evanescent activity the religion which is built

upon it. We are therefore driven back upon intelligent conviction as the only efficient basis for faith.

The need for a careful review of the basis of faith demonstrates itself as we attempt to classify men according to the nature of their religious belief. For this purpose it is apparent that the bulk of church adherents are of little account. They lack both conviction and personal experience. They accept religion as one item in a social environment which they take for granted. They neither question it nor take a live interest in it. They are respectable members of the community; they could not imagine life without churches, parsons, and services. But they have no personal faith, and so they feel no need of any basis for it.

Those who do possess a spiritual experience divide into two classes—those whose faith is grounded in personal conviction and those who depend upon some kind of authority. The latter class enormously preponderates. Our fathers never thought of going beyond the bare word of Scripture for all-sufficient authority. "The Bible says so" was their final argument. It should be noted that so long as the Bible maintained that place of

absolute authority it provided just such a basis of fact for conviction, for the necessity of which we are arguing. But suppose that authority to be challenged. Suppose that, instead of being the judge, the Bible is now seen to be itself one item of the evidence, calling for examination and appraisal, what will then become of the faith of one in possession of a genuine spiritual experience which originally took the Bible for granted as final authority? The issue will depend on whether the individual has the religious or the scientific temperament. If the former, a schism is liable to occur in the mind. The soul must be barred and barricaded against all questioning, and the religious life will proceed, but as in a state of siege. If the latter, religion will be adapted to a rationalistic view of things, and spiritual experience will be interpreted in terms of æsthetics or psychology, or both. But in the process the vitality of the old faith will be lost. Cases of both these types are common in these days. Once the final authority of Scripture is impaired, unless the divorced intelligence and faith be reunited in some higher synthesis the mind is sent upon a pilgrimage which can logically end only in one of two goals—Rome or agnosticism.

Many voices are denying with uneasy vehemence that the authority of Scripture is at all impaired. So conservative a scholar as Principal Forsyth, however, declared years ago that "the Bible has gone in that sense" (of absolute authority). The ordinary person with no special religious predilections readily admits that the Bible has ceased to have its ancient place of absolute power. It is just this fact which makes the old-time type of revival increasingly rare, and endeavors to reproduce it increasingly futile. Then men were deep-dyed sinners and the Bible the direct word of an offended Deity. What wonder that it shook their souls! Now men feel only half-tone sinners, and the Bible the record of the religious past calling for a discriminating appreciation! We may not like it, but it is a factor that counts in all religious effort.

Can we wonder that modern revival results are found chiefly among children and the more sentimental adults? How, indeed, can it be otherwise until the appeal of religion is addressed to the conscience through the intelligence rather than through the emotional instincts?

No one in contact with the mind of men

can fail to be struck by the increasing number of those who, while professedly nonreligious, maintain an open attitude toward Christianity; some wistfully, as desiring to recover something they have lost since childhood; some sincerely, though critically, demanding credentials and promising allegiance upon conviction. If the professional exponents of the gospel are unable fairly to meet such men on their own ground, they may as well be pensioned off and settled in some ecclesiastical Home for the Decrepit, and religion itself declared to be one of the things which have had their day, and now might as well cease to be. But it is in the confidence that Christianity not only will allow of intelligent approach, but demands it, that we here insist upon reasoned conviction as the only safe and practical basis for faith.

Spiritual experience is an arch supported by two piers. One is the historical manifestation of God in Christ; the other is given in the facts and needs of the personal life. The foundation is not the building, but it is essential to the building. Intuition and emotion can serve for fanaticism. Faith needs Fact.

“RELIGION IS CAUGHT, NOT TAUGHT”

THIS was reported as the utterance of an Anglican canon, quoting with approval the Dean of St. Paul's with reference to a Wesleyan revival on the East Coast of England among Scotch fishermen and fisher-lassies. It expresses a deep-rooted belief in considerable circles of evangelical Christendom. It is also a striking example of the power of a phrase to obscure. Thrown off as a wildly provocative epigram, one could smile and make necessary qualifications in one's own mind, and pass on to more serious thoughts. But it appears to have been used with some deliberation to express what was felt to be the fundamental lesson to be drawn from that and similar movements of religion.

What it means, if it means anything, is that, no matter how wise, prolonged, and helpful be the Christian nurture, personal religion springs spontaneously and apart from all means of an educative sort. If it were true, it would reduce to an absurdity the program of religious education which is

being enterprised on this side of the Atlantic, and throw us back upon old methods of religious instruction, wherein information about God and the Bible was imparted as a preparation for a possible and accidental conversion. But it is not true. With due respect, I venture to express my surprise that eminent clergymen should be found to indorse it. Incidentally, there is something humorous in a situation where an Anglican clergyman is found depreciating religious education and a Methodist minister stressing it!

In any sense in which this epigram may have validity it is equally and for the same reasons true to say that science is caught, not taught; that algebra is caught, not taught; or any other knowledge, art, or craft is caught, not taught. Of course I am assuming that most of us have long ago shed the primitive notion of education as a process of "beating it in" whether by sound waves or more violent means. It may be that when these estimable clergymen were schoolboys that was still the approved method of instruction; if so, there is a natural explanation for their misuse of the word "taught." Competent teachers know, however, as a fundamental principle of pedagogy, that they do not

accomplish their proper work until and unless they succeed in eliciting a personal interest on the part of the pupil, and education to-day includes and means exactly that. The narrow view of teaching as the mere demonstration of a subject before a passive class, the handing out of so much information, is discredited and despised everywhere to-day. If our school work is now carried out in a markedly different manner from the ways in vogue a few years ago, that is because of a new attention to this principle. It is also due to the discovery that this spontaneous interest can be elicited by wise methods skillfully applied; that, in fact, it is there, waiting to be elicited. Until it is quickened into activity education does not amount to education. Something must be kindled in the mind of the pupil; otherwise lessons may be learned, facts may be memorized, but the mind does not develop.

Often the change from passivity to active interest is as sudden and unaccountable as an unlooked-for religious revival. The pupil fumbles and bungles with dragging mind and lacking interest, and then one day awakes with a new-born interest, and with it a new ability. He does not know how it came about; it has simply arrived. The pupil has

“caught” music, mathematics, Latin, or whatever it may be. From now on there is progress because something in the learner co-operates with the teacher. But for that personal outgoing of interest and energy all the efforts of the teacher count for nothing. Nevertheless, that mysterious quickening is a vital result of the teacher’s work; he has been working for that, looking for that, and so is not surprised when it appears.

Of course, it is true that religion *is* caught; the fallacy lies in the unreal antithesis “not taught.” In fact, it is patent that religion cannot possibly be caught unless it be taught. “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” The very nature of our Lord’s commission to his disciples emphasizes that. If religion be caught, not taught, all that was necessary would be for the group of believers to live their Christian lives quietly to themselves in some sheltered community, and let the rest of the world catch the gospel by spiritual infection. They need only cultivate their “little garden walled around,” and trust chance winds to carry the seeds and pollen over the wall into the desert around. And beyond question this has been,

and is, the explicit policy of some Christian communities. But it is not the mind of Christ. “Come. . . . Learn,” He said. Then, “Go. . . . *Teach.*”

The fallacious conception underlying this catch-phrase is quite on a par with the feeling expressed in the frequent misquotation of Scripture, “Paul *may* plant, and Apollos *may* water, but God giveth the increase.” The assumption is that the planting and watering are insignificant to the point of being unnecessary, because, after all, it is God who does it all, or does not do it, as the case may be. The truth is that God created the seed with powers of development, but has put it up to man to assemble the conditions for securing crops. Without man’s intervention you can have a riot of weeds, but a crop is a human creation, since it never would be but for man. And God created the soul to have aspirations and capacities for the divine, but works through human agencies to draw out the possibility into actuality.

Wherever the element of education is either lacking or defective there appears a proof that religion cannot be “caught” in any worthy form, without being adequately “taught.” The young Mohammed, abnormal

and probably epileptic, felt the pressure of invisible reality. His unsettlement took the form of a revolt against the religion of his time and locality. The religion he founded was, however, by no means a product *de novo et ab ovo*. Its form is clearly recognizable as the result of an educative process, and an unfortunate one at that. History might have been spared some bloody chapters, had Mohammed met more competent instructors than Jewish traders and corrupt Coptic Christians.

A striking illustration of religion being caught rather than taught (note the amended form, please) is found in the case of the frenzied community impulse which periodically seizes people like the Doukhobors, thrusting them forth upon aimless pilgrimages in a state of stark nudity. Here you have a very, almost an excessively, religious people, with a minimum of sound education. The very fervor of their fanaticism proves their sincerity, but what except a process of education will ever prevent this religious energy from being worse than wasted? Now, I personally see no reason to suppose that the initial impulse in the soul of the community in their case is any different in nature or

quality from that which brought about the aforementioned Scotch revival. The difference in outcome is a difference in education, always remembering that education may operate as atmosphere no less than as actual instruction.

No; religion is *never* "caught, not taught." What is caught in the absence of any kind of external enlightenment and training does not amount to religion, and may quite easily take the form of an orgy of animalism. With a minimum of instruction, or in any atmosphere of superstition, religion tends to morbidity. There never was a movement of worth-while religion that did not involve a process of sound education somewhere, and all the great movements like the Reformation and the Methodist Revival, whatever their popular adaptations, had a core of fine and sound scholarship. Because I feel deeply that the great need of our times is for the creation of a fund of intelligent conviction in religion, I deprecate such utterances as peculiarly unfortunate.

It is not difficult to see why the counterfeit wisdom of the phrase should pass as current coin. There is apparently a hiatus between any teaching effort and its result in the up-

springing personal effort. It is because of this apparent disconnection that it is possible for anyone to say, "Religion is caught, not taught." But the hiatus is only apparent. Religious experience has its springs deep in that hidden and mysterious region of personality that our Fathers called the Soul, and which in these days we prefer to rechristen the Subconscious. Study of this veiled realm has made this abundantly clear, that the Subconscious cannot be affected directly by instruction or command, but that it is remarkably amenable to suggestion. Often the more emphatic and deliberate the endeavor by the teacher, or even the pupil himself, the greater the internal resistance set up in the subconscious mind. For this reason a study of pupil psychology is an essential part of any modern normal course, in order that teachers may know how to give their work the stimulating form of suggestion and avoid the sterilizing form of mere instruction. The church is seeking to do the same thing for its Sunday-school teachers in its teacher-training courses, realizing the profound importance of this where the immortal soul is concerned rather than the mere intellect.

Our whole effort in religious education would be futile were it not for the latent capacity in the pupil to “catch” religion, just as the gardener’s efforts would be wasted but for the spark of life in the seed. But in order that the soul may kindle, and the seed germinate, our skilled and untiring labor is called for. It is not an impertinent, because superfluous, addition to the work of God, but is, indeed, itself a part of that same divine operation.

Religious revivals of a more or less satisfactory nature will, no doubt, appear from time to time. Thank God that life will manifest itself, even in inauspicious circumstances and strange forms. But the concentration of attention upon abnormalities is not wise, and the erecting of them into admirable standards is perilous. Religion must be taught with skill as well as devotion, in order that it may be “caught” in vigorous and healthy form.

EDUCATIONAL EVANGELISM

As a phrase this has already made its *début* in church literature. It is neat and happy, and may have quite a vogue. It crystallizes a philosophy of religious propaganda which has just achieved the stage of recognized orthodoxy. That is not to say that no one disputes it; what orthodoxy is there that is not repudiated by somebody? But at least it has arrived at the point where it can stand up without apologizing for its existence. There are still many who look with suspicion upon any other method of entering upon the religious life than that of the wrenching free of the soul from sin by an agony of conviction, repentance, and dramatic conversion. They will no doubt feel that this phrase is a mere begging of the question, and the concentration in a smart phrase of the very spirit of modern religious decadence. But then, modern religion always was decadent! Time tests phrases as well as movements; if the principle and method indicated by the words bear the stress of experience, they will doubtless become current coin in religious thinking.

Whoever is privileged to hear a number of ordination candidates give their experience of conversion must be struck by the frequency of cases where no particular date, and no sharp crisis, could be recorded in connection with conversion. Some of us can remember the time when testimonies of that sort would have been challenged as indicating a defective religious standing. We do now generally admit the validity of the experience characterized by a growth into religion rather than a violent and conscious break with the past. But have we seen and recognized the implications of our changed attitude? To admit a revolutionary thought among our stock of working ideas without getting its exact content and its bearings upon life—that is the sure way to unreality. Those especially who are concerned with the religious development of the child need to face the situation exhibited by the emergence of this phrase with attention and the inquiring mind. Upon consideration two things appear which are illuminative and directive for such endeavor. In the first place, it would seem that there is no essential antagonism in the nascent soul toward God and religion. Whatever theology may have to say

about a moral handicap in the human make-up, it becomes plain that the normal child, normally developed, is not averse to the things of the Spirit. Upon that it becomes clear that the matter of immediate importance for religious workers is how best to deal with the child mind so as to claim the child soul as early as possible for Christ.

Of course this matter of religious education is only by default the peculiar care of the churches. When our recently created professors of religious education have got used to the idea of their own existence, and have arranged their courses of lectures for theologs, and their series of talks for Sunday-school workers, may they be led and inspired to tackle what is, after all, the chief need in this connection, namely, the training of parents for the management of their children for religious ends! Nothing humorous is here intended. Parenthood is being taken more and more seriously every day. It is becoming the proper thing for young people to inform themselves of the laws of physical procreation before undertaking the responsibilities of a family. The happy-go-lucky days of blissful ignorance are passing—slowly. There is quite a wonderful literature on the

subject, including even correspondence courses for expectant and young mothers. The need for expert help is felt also in regard to the more difficult enterprise of the training of the young child in the home. We have read advertisements of courses on child management arranged by professors of psychology who had specialized therein. If a need is acknowledged for the best and soundest instruction in the art of caring for the body and mind, surely the need for help in the work of training the growing soul is even more urgent. It is not enough that parents be themselves never so well intentioned and personally pious. Beyond that they still need to know how. Is not this fully apparent? Is it not the reason why so many of the children of pious people fail to develop piety themselves? May not this be the cause why some of the children even of ministers turn out badly? It is not every genuinely Christian soul that has the right touch, or is capable of the sympathetic and intelligent approach to the child mind in its religious relations. With the best will in the world some people only succeed in impressing children with the fact that they are anxious to impress them. One of the painful puzzlements of the writer's

early years was due to this, that while his teacher was a man of unquestionable devotion, the religion he presented was, on the whole, unattractive. He made the pupil feel that he ought to be impressed with something, and vaguely wonder why he was not.

It will not do for the church to reiterate the old complaint that it only receives the children into its hands after the early years in the home have already started the soul unadvisedly, without making some effort to educate its parents for the supreme religious duty of utilizing the opportunity of parenthood in the service of God. We look, therefore, for the early introduction of a new kind of mothers' meeting, and—might it be hoped!—fathers' meeting also.

Religion is not alien to the child, however it may be to the unconverted adult. Surely, this is the significance of Christ's saying, "Of such is the kingdom." The doctrine of original sin has become too unwieldy for our use, but we are hardly yet sufficiently free from some of its artificial implications to be able to make a fresh, unencumbered approach to the subject of the child and religion. Do we really believe that Christianity and the child represent mutual attractions? Perhaps we

are still a little confused as to the nature of essential Christianity, and not sure just what is normal in the child. Churches and services have their place and function as means, but we are all too apt to forget that they are only means, and that the practice of religion is chiefly a matter of courageous and helpful living. There are so many good people who cannot see religion in a child unless it show itself in an eagerness for vocal expression in a prayer meeting. The paralyzed child whose pathologic precocity takes a religious turn is still held up as a model for his brothers and sisters of lusty, noisy, and self-assertive health. The minister who gathers the young people within the sheltering fold of pledged church membership is still criticized and hindered by those who insist upon seeing the marks of ripened spiritual experience as a passport for entrance. Surely, Wesley was wiser when he made the sole condition for entrance into his societies the "desire to flee from the wrath to come" rather than any evident spiritual accomplishment.

It is a moot question whether some of the signs sought as evidence of personal religion are not exaggerations, or defects, as applied to the normal adult, let alone the immature.

We need a new standard of saintship. The Christian citizen is really the highest type of Christian. The monastic ideal has broken down, but we are still hampered by its debris. The notion is deeply rooted that it is only persons like the minister, separated from the ruck of common affairs, who can achieve anything like a standard type of character and life. That fallacy must go. All honor to those who for special service place limitations upon themselves and their self-realization. There will always be need for some to make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom. But the *normal* Christian is the man of the world—of *this* world, *God's* world—who lives the full human life by the grace of Christ.

To the child also holiness must be made to mean wholeness, healthiness, completeness. We must learn not to impose an adult type of religion upon the child, and especially not to try to teach as essential religion what, after all, may be only a partial and defective type. Somehow or other the impression is abroad that the virtues most prized by religious people are those commonly associated with a certain lack of physical vitality. Insofar as this is true—and there is a measure of truth in it

—Nietzsche's protest against anæmic goodness was quite in order.

The normal child's naughtiness (slightly stress the word "normal," gentle reader) is not an indication of innate depravity, but of lack of adjustment. Children who never drive their parents to distraction usually die early. They die because they are not endowed with normal stamina. A child's energy naturally runs to mischief; his imagination easily exercises as lying; his curiosity is a source of abundant trouble. But energy, imagination, and curiosity are important assets for the individual, and through him, for society. In fact, the individual stands high in the scale of human worth just in proportion as he is endowed with these very gifts.

But they have to be brought into relation with life's tasks, needs, and obligations. This is what we mean by adjustment. Of course it is a delicate process which may easily go wrong. The endeavor to help developing personality is no light task. It involves dealing with a will that cannot be forced and may easily be antagonized. Who can say how many of the black sheep of society who manifested such capacity for leadership in hero-

ism and sacrifice during the Great War were cases of maladjustment, perhaps contributed to by blundering efforts on the part of well-meaning persons? The difference between the life that is belligerently against good and that which is militant against evil may have meant at a certain stage only the difference between tactless and tactful religious effort. The work of helping personalities to take the right attitude and direction calls for such a special kind of adjustment that it requires a special term to express it. That term is "education."

The old pulpit anthesis, "Education vs. Regeneration," involved a misconception of both terms. Regeneration was conceived almost as replacement; as when one returns defective goods to the maker, who supplies sound ones in their stead. Nothing like that happens in the spiritual order. The regenerate man has not a new nature, though it may be renewed. It is the same nature, brought into a new adjustment through the emergence of the spiritual capacities from dormancy to dominance.

Education was superficially conceived as the filling up of the mind with so much knowledge. Of course it really means development

of latent faculties through wise leadership. It is the leading-out of possibilities into actual capacities in a personality able to hang back as well as to follow. However we may designate the influence that may be brought to bear upon the adult sinner, the influence that helps a child to expand into religious normality is rightly called education. Evangelism suggests the conscious, systematic, and devoted effort to apply the gospel in the winning of souls. What term, then, can so fittingly express the effort to apply the gospel in the training of the children for the Kingdom to which Christ says they naturally belong, as "Educational Evangelism"?

It is true that the technical vocabulary of the subject has a forbidding aspect. The devoted Sunday-school teachers of the past and present may be excused for looking askance at "child psychology," "the problem of the adolescent," "religious pedagogy," etc. Perhaps the hardest part of the work of the professors of this new science will be the effort to translate this jargon into intelligible, if commonplace language. Maybe it were wise (we offer the suggestion with diffidence, though without apology) for them to impose

a certain politic reserve upon their professional enthusiasm. They might possibly accomplish more in the long run if, instead of unloading the entire science of which they are the exponents upon helpless Sunday-school staffs, with possibly devastating results, they were to spend their field efforts in sympathetic investigation of actual conditions, dropping here and there a hint that could be really applied. We may as well make up our minds that for a long time to come the greater part of Sunday-school work and young people's work will be run on lines of devoted inefficiency. Better that than nothing. Meanwhile we can work in faith toward the ideal of efficient devotion.

We will never get what we might out of our efforts at training children for the Kingdom until the strong men and women of capacity and culture realize their duty and privilege in this matter. The teaching of a Sunday-school class has not appealed to such in the past, for several reasons, not all selfish or slothful. But with modern methods of school management, and with the linking up of the splendid teen-age programs for boys and girls, this field offers more and more a magnificent opportunity for the investment

of time, thought, and energy, which the privileged among us owe to Christ for service. They are stewards of the wealth of knowledge and culture, not merely to enjoy but to pass on to others. In doing so they are accomplishing a work as really evangelical as that of any revivalist, professional or lay.

THE DEFECTION OF THE EDUCATED

"WE hear much of the alienation of the working classes from religion, and new ways are bravely devised to reach the masses and to preach the gospel to the poor. But this defection of the wage-earners, serious as it may be, does not compare in significance with the intellectual neutrality or indifference of great numbers of the privileged and thoughtful." So wrote Professor F. G. Peabody a few years ago.

Comparisons are invidious. Nevertheless, there is a defection of the educated classes which does not appear to have received the consideration its gravity merits from the churches.

Human nature is much the same in all the classes. No doubt the chief hindrances in the way of the privileged classes taking a definite stand in allegiance to Christ are the same as those operating among the workers, namely, self-will and lack of moral courage. But above and beyond these it does appear that there may be other causes, not of a moral nature, but rather of the nature of misunder-

standing. If there are any such misconceptions, whether they play a large or small part in keeping men away from Christian discipleship, they surely call for careful and sympathetic treatment by the Christian pulpit, if only by way of removing any reasonable ground of excuse.

It has been already pointed out that the average man feels an instinctive reticence in presence of the more emotional type of religious devotion. It is unfortunate that personal religion should have become associated, in the popular supposition, with a particular type and tone. There is no doubt in the writer's mind that many persons who do appreciate the splendor of Christ and would give themselves to the service of his kingdom, are somehow chilled and repelled in the presence of the more expressional kind of piety. They do not impugn its sincerity, but they cannot find within themselves any impulse toward demonstration like it. They know that if they were to force themselves to express religion in just that way, they would be unreal. Their experiences of churches leads them to suppose such expression to be essential, and so they feel themselves to lack some necessary element of genuine religion.

Until they find themselves impelled to such expression they will not take the Christian stand; they shrink, however, from the idea of letting the emotional take charge of them.

There is another and more radical difficulty felt by the thoughtful. They are acquainted, more or less superficially it may be, with the ethics of the gospel. They are conscious that some, at least, of the sayings of Jesus could not possibly be practiced in the present social order. Therefore they are not willing to profess allegiance to a gospel which involves subscription to principles which they could not, and therefore would not, promise to practice. On the whole this is a good sign. It would be better still if the sincerity thus shown were a little more thorough. Then it would lead either to an investigation of the ethics of Jesus, or their definite repudiation. Although the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount appear idealistic and unreal to them, they do not follow out the logical implication that a gospel which inculcated an impossible morality would be an impossible gospel. They perhaps keep up a loose connection with the church, but it is apt to be of a distant and rather patronizing kind. Tolstoy and Nietzsche from different

points of view, did each take the words of Jesus with resolute literalness the one in a heroic but vain effort to carry them out in personal practice, the other to pour scorn upon them in contrast with his own gospel of self-assertion. However pathetic the failure of Tolstoy, and however revolting the cool insolence of Nietzsche, these were both morally superior to the man who puts the Sermon on the Mount in a glass case of sentimental veneration, but will not take the trouble either to practice or understand it.

Religious people do not, as a rule, allow the strong statements of Christ to worry them unduly. They feel that they are ideal; they recognize their own declension from them, they bewail the fact with a measure of sincerity; but they go on living by the accommodated ethics of ordinary respectable society all the same. They suppose in the back of their mind that there must be some principle of interpretation for the hard sayings of the gospel; but they do not trouble themselves much to seek it. Their practical "interpretation" has the effect of reducing the teachings of Jesus to a rather poetical version of the conventional standard of honesty and good nature.

The effect is, however, different with the special class we are considering, who are largely the college-trained sons and daughters of prosperous people. One effect of modern education is to create a certain rough and bluff sincerity. They may not be any more heroic than the unthinking religious people, but their sense of reality is a little keener and a lot more stubborn. That is all. But it is sufficient to serve as an excuse with many a fine man and woman for waiving the gospel demand for surrender and service.

Ethics is a by-product of the gospel; yet since Christ himself asserted that the world would test his followers by the fruit of the gospel in conduct, we cannot demur to the world's interest in Christian morality. Men are questioning the present structure of society as never before, and looking around for more satisfactory principles of human intercourse. If Christ has any word for to-day—if he did propose any definite moral principles for application to common life, if his principles are fundamentally *right*, and therefore of authority for life—there is surely need that men should be made to hear and understand his teachings.

Do the sayings of Jesus require literal

obedience? If not, what is their meaning and value? How did the circumstances of time, place, and people affect the form of his instruction? What were his final aims, and how would he be likely to express them to us men of the social, political, and industrial twentieth century? These are questions calling for treatment in our days if the attention and respect of the thoughtful are to be won and retained.

There is another difficulty which underlies and includes the two already mentioned. This is the matter of intellectual atmosphere. It is not the content of belief but a certain manner of approach which tends to antagonize the cultured. There are, of course, controversies upon definite issues, which have crystallized out of the difference in attitude. Such is the dispute over the doctrine of evolution in its various applications. The hypothesis is one of the accepted commonplaces of high schools and colleges; but it is, from many pulpits, not only rejected, but rejected with anger and contumely. Wherever this happens it is inevitable that the educational influence should triumph over the religious.

Apart from such definite controversies,

however, there exists a difference of attitude and approach between the thought of the time and the preaching of the time—with striking exceptions, of course. The more or less intense consciousness of this difference stands as a barrier between the youth of this generation and the call of religion. Our young people are educated in the methods of thought consonant with the realities and activities of the busy life of to-day, and they feel the intellectual temper of many churches to be somehow alien.

The intellectual atmosphere of our time, what is intended by the phrase “the modern mind,” is not so much materialistic as it is realistic, in the sense that it connotes a readiness to see and respond to what *really is*, and a suspicion of the merely intuitional and shadowy. Blank authority in every sphere has given way before the authority of fact. That is what has given us modern science as distinguished from the quasi-sciences. Never before have men been so keen on understanding life and nature, on seeing just what *is*, in order that they might help to get life adjusted to reality, knowing that only such adjustment can guarantee safety and prosperity.

To some extent this mental habit is finding

place in the churches. It is functioning quite vigorously in the colleges. It is hardly yet completely at home in the pulpit. The mental atmosphere of the churches is "spiritual" in an æsthetic and intuitional and emotional way, with a reference to a vaguely defined authority of revelation. But it does not carry the note of a confident appeal to reality. Yet the Christian gospel is intensely realistic. It stands squarely on historical fact; not "founded on fact" like a worked-up story. But for the element of fact in it, it could not have come into existence as a world movement at all, much less weathered the storms of the centuries. It was the Person of Christ that created Christendom. It was not the special teaching of Jesus about God, nor his ethical principles for the life of man, but what he was, and did, and what happened to him. At the critical point it was their conviction of the actuality of his resurrection which transformed the disciples from disillusioned enthusiasts to puissant pioneers of the Christian faith. The Person of Christ constitutes the gospel; but it is the fact of Christ which was, and is, the cutting edge of the gospel.

There is, of course, a sense in which the purely "spiritual" type of religion deals with

the realities of the personal life. Even so, the circle of ideas and the phraseology of personal religion in general use seem touched with a fragrant remoteness from the palpitating realities of the life of to-day. Not the most efficiently spiritual gospel can maintain itself as a revelation of God and guarantee of the future, unless it connect somewhere with historical reality. Facts, as such, may not be able to do anything for our souls, yet at the same time the sublimest gospel cannot give the sense of security in belief that we need, if it be not firmly anchored in reality.

There is no need for the churches to doubt the adequacy of their gospel in this regard, or the responsiveness of the mind of our time. For this latter is not antagonistic to religion, however much it may resent unreality in religion. The modern mind is not rationalistic. Rationalism is, indeed, the superstition of reason, as obscurantism is the superstition of belief. Fanaticism does not discredit a sane faith, nor should the existence of rationalism discredit the modern mind, which is radically sound.

When we have firmly asserted that the experience of salvation does not depend upon an intellectual understanding of theology, it

remains to be said that the man of cultivated intelligence can neither have nor maintain personal religion in the absence of a basis for faith in intelligent conviction.

If the churches call for a devotion that is intelligently purposive, if they expound and exhibit the ethical principles of the gospel, and if they meet the modern mind on its own ground, they will secure the educated youth of this generation for the religious leaders of the next. But if they should not develop in these directions they will probably have to face a continually growing defection of the reading and thinking class, as popular education grows in efficiency.

MIND AND SOUL

THE emphasis in the title is on the middle word. So often it is the little words that carry the significance. In this case the significance consists in the fact that the word is "and," and not "or." Not seldom one hears an address based on the text "Mind or Soul," or words to that effect. "Education! Oh, yes! But, after all, education is not regeneration!" "Intellect! Very good, when conjoined with lowly minded devotion! But compared with the immortal soul—!" "Not more knowledge, but more piety!" "The saints, not the sages—!" It is all so religious, so easy, and so thoroughly wrong. Surely, we have here a case of false antithesis. Can mind and soul be mutually antagonistic? If it were so, it would appear that for some time to come religion must wander in a bleak and barren wilderness. For in the practical world that counts, the emphasis is being placed more and more on mental efficiency. We send our children to school, high school, and college especially to have their minds developed and trained. Then we wonder uneasily when we find them disturbed by the atmosphere of some churches and the tone of

some sermons, in which the realm of tested knowledge and careful thinking is depreciated in the name of piety!

When one gets down to raw reality, surely this is the reason for the puzzling anomaly in the contemporaneous religious situation, that there is in certain quarters quite a keen intellectual interest in religion which is, however, not often manifested within the churches. Those interested in religion within the churches frequently discount sermons and worship calling for effort of mind. The ordinary congregation, it would seem, prefers preaching that gently massages the emotional sensibilities. Nevertheless, there is a rising tide of intelligent interest in religion as fact and principle and reality. The pendulum has already swung away from the crass materialism and the crude realism of the nineteenth century. Some of this interest does seep into the churches, but it is apt to find itself not at home there with either pulpit or pew, and so either hangs on in a state of aloof adherence, or gives up in despair and settles into exteriorized indifference. If there were an inherent incompatibility between mind and soul, it would seem likely that soul will get the worst of it, for increasingly, and for weal

or woe, this is the era of mind. But that there is any such incompatibility in the nature of things is what I wish to deny with violence.

But let us be agreed as to our meaning; and, by way of "dishing the opposition," let us cheerfully admit all that can be said on the other side. For instance, it must be recognized that the overcultivation of the mental life, without counterbalancing interests in other realms, can be a serious hindrance to personal religion. There is no doubt that one effect of the extraordinary progress of science in the last century was to make religious faith more difficult. That was partly because the conception of universal law suggested a more or less automatic universe; partly because the success of rigidly inductive methods inevitably cast a slur upon human beliefs arising out of the groping experience, and passed on by the embroidered traditions of the race, and partly on account of the mere concentration of attention in one direction. As a result there occurred a general hardening in the attitude toward religion. What had once been assumed as fundamental was now looked upon as subsidiary, questionable, or merely a matter of taste.

"Relatively few medical men and scientific men, I fancy," said William James, "can pray. . . . Yet many of us are well aware of how much freer and abler our lives would be were such important forms of energizing not sealed up by the critical atmosphere in which we have been reared."

Let it also be freely conceded that personal religion rises in and depends upon those mysterious powers of personality that used to be called the soul, and which modern thought now consents to acknowledge as the subconscious. Its activities are not logical thought-processes, but imagination, intuition, appreciation, with suggestions of more mysterious functions like telepathy. "Head" and "heart" are the terms in popular usage to designate the apparent antinomy presented by the two sides of personality. There certainly is a cleavage in personal life, but the terms "head" and "heart" do not represent the conflicting elements. We will return to this in a moment. For the present let us remind ourselves that evangelical religion involves a personal and direct dealing with God. That direct dealing with God, however, is not on the level of the superficial conscious life, but in the hidden depths of personality.

There are far-reaching theological implications here calling for exploration. It seems likely that theological study in the near future will find in this direction a fruitful field yielding results of practical value.

So far as evangelicalism has suffered distortion, defect, or excess—and no great vital movement can altogether escape these—it has been because we have sought to secure conscious spiritual results in a conscious way by conscious means, when really we were dealing with an essentially subconscious process.

When preachers set mind and soul in opposition, meaning by these terms intellect and emotion, they make a double mistake. For thought and feeling are not incompatibles; and emotion is as much a part of the superficial conscious life as formal thought. Really, both thought and feeling represent activities of mind. Thought is mind effort and feeling is mind reaction. Thought is ingredient; feeling is by-product. But neither constitutes separately, nor both together, that contact and commerce of the soul with God. That takes place in depths of personality not entirely independent of thought and feeling, and yet certainly on quite a different level. Here we come within view of

the reason why effort to propagate religion by more or less efficient ways of manipulating emotion is generally futile. It is as though a manufacturer organizing his plant should concentrate upon by-products on the supposition that the desired end would take care of itself. What one gets, in both cases, is very apt to be—just by-product.

Whatever apparent antinomy may exist in religion is not between intelligence and emotion. These act and react naturally and inevitably. They are but different aspects of the one conscious life. The real difficulty is between this conscious life and the wide and deep and dark movements of the subconscious. It is in this realm of mystery that religion functions. Here, and not in emotion or thought, is the soul. The positive and negative poles of religion are not "head" and "heart," but the conscious and the subconscious.

While the relations between mind and soul, so defined, offer a pretty problem for the psychological theologian, they have import for the ordinary person also. Religion, it appears, is not as simple a thing as we have permitted ourselves to suppose, however available for the simplest may be its open

secret. It cannot be reduced to a handy universal formula. There is no recipe for the Christian experience guaranteed to deliver immediate results in every case. "I waited patiently for the Lord," said the psalmist. But why did he have to wait at all? The Hebrew idiom could perhaps be better rendered in the colloquial English, "I waited and waited and waited." But given a heart conscious of its need, and a God eager to redeem, like the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, why any delay, feebleness, or uncertainty? Yet we know these to have occurred in the life of many saints. It cannot be due to any slowness or caprice in God. It may be due to a defectiveness of functioning between the subconscious in us, whereby we make contact with the Divine Spirit, and our conscious life. That there are difficulties here is strongly suggested by psychic research. It would seem, for instance, that the personality, though it never really forgets anything, is often hard put to it to tap its own resources in the buried memory. It seems impossible to manipulate our hidden selves by any direct effort of will. Indeed, it would appear as though we are in more real and intimate contact *subconsciously* with those we love than

our conscious mind is with our subliminal self. A recent writer suggests that the further progress of human evolution is bound to take the direction of an increasing coalescence of the field of the subconscious with that of the conscious life. Genius has been defined as a precocious achievement of such a state. All creative thought is a process of digging up the results of subconscious functioning. Religious experience also is a dealing with the depths in ourselves. The crux of the present fight for faith has to do with the question whether in religion we are dealing with anything *more* than our own subconsciousness, with its extraordinary range and surprising powers.

Intuition is undoubtedly the human organ of revelation. Some modern thinkers would exalt it above intelligence; but that is probably an exaggeration. It remains that intuition, as the direct awareness of reality, tends to be more and more recognized. It is quite likely that miracle may one day be looked upon as the manifestation of powers only abnormal because generally still undeveloped among men. Prayer certainly involves telepathy between the human and the Divine, and possibly between separate human minds also.

The conditions of prevailing prayer as they are set forth with sharp insistence in Mark 11. 24 seem identical with the conditions, so far as we know them, of any successful psychic effort.

All this by way of admitting that the seat of religion is in the subconscious personality. That is not to confine religion to the dark depths. The subconscious may be the organ of the religious life, but there could be no religion but for the conscious mind to interpret the blind instinct and impulse, and receive the communication from the Divine. And there you have the real and necessary relation between mind and soul. While you cannot have a religion that is merely intellectual, neither can you have genuine religion unless it be compact of intelligence and conscious purpose. Religious experience involves the welling up of instincts and impulses that have a deeper seat and a wider range than any part of our conscious life. To these mysterious movements of our own spirit we must react both in thought and feeling. If we deal with them only in the way of thought, we will be mere spectators, holding aloof from life. We will be hard intellectualists, making a profession or a hobby of our

exploration of religion. On the other hand, we may put a ban on intellect and deal with religion only emotionally. Then we will be helpless victims of whatever fanaticism or dead orthodoxy happens to be contemporary or popular in our vicinity. But fanatical religion has within itself the sentence of death. It is extremely unlikely that there will ever again be a widespread religious movement that is not intelligent. Popular education has taken effect to that extent at least.

Religious protagonists must cease to fear and depreciate the intellect. That is suicidal. God in history has appealed to the conscience of man through his intelligence. We must be willing to do the same. The general reconciliation of mind and soul foretold by Tennyson is already overdue. We begin to see the possibility of an era of harmony and co-operation. Intellect, unduly exalted in its dearly bought freedom, has asserted its sovereignty long enough to find out that it has no right to autocracy. It is discovering its limitations and becoming aware of life's fourth dimension. Already we hear strains of the "one music," and catch glimpses of the "vaster" in both thought and feeling that shall be ours in days to come.

“AS BEFORE—BUT VASTER”

WHATEVER else may be true of our present-day conceptions of religion, it is certain that they are indeed “vaster.” In truth it is the vastness of them that causes those to shrink from them who are habituated to older constructions. Our fathers had a pretty satisfactory system that enabled them to relate the world of things and phenomena with their religious experience in a working harmony. It served the needs of many generations. As a result it came to be considered as of the essence of religion, or at least necessarily associated with religious belief. But it has been broken down by the erosion of modern methods, involving the process of investigation through observation, experiment, and hypothesis, and to-day we live in a different thought world. We are in the course of adjusting our minds religiously to a new system, and that inevitably produces a certain amount of confusion and friction. Nevertheless, because religion is of the ultimate essence of things, nothing really valuable can be lost. Relying on the analogy of similar transitions

in the past, we feel that the poet's prophecy is well founded, that after the difficulties and perplexities and trouble of the reconciliation period, religion will be found to have gained in clarity, in certainty, and in comprehensiveness. It will be "as before," in utility and blessing and power, "but vaster" in range.

This experience of enlargement in religious conception is not unlike the feelings induced in one who is thrust out of a cozy home into the open air. It is evening, let us suppose. I sit in slippered ease in a chair whose upholstery has achieved a gracious accommodation to my figure. The firelight glows. The table lamp sheds a circle of mellow radiance. I have a favorite book. I am extremely comfortable, and at peace with all the world. Now you recognize at once that the picture is all wrong in its details. There are no more of those armchairs. There are only art constructions to which one must accommodate himself. There is no longer any firelight to dance and glow. There is a hole in the floor, a coil of pipes, or a set of iron castings painted to match the decorations. The insolent electric glare has displaced the mellow lamplight. Indeed, probably father and mother no longer read and darn socks in a

family sitting room; more likely they follow their young people in the pursuit of the great god Jazz. Thus do even our illustrations become out of date. But at least people used to do that kind of thing within living memory. So let us call up the recollection by way of illustration. Well, I am comfortable. I am unaware of the fact that the room is somewhat stuffy, but by and by the printed page blurs before my eyes, and I yawn in unconscious surrender to the drowsy atmosphere.

Then comes the sharp call of the 'phone, or the knock at the door that brings the demand that I shall go forth. The interruption is unwelcome, but I meet it with polite response and subconscious annoyance. I had settled down for the evening. Outside it is dark and chill. I can hardly see at first, and a harsh wind blows. I miss the friendly four walls and the pleasant warmth. I have a sense of discomfort, of emptiness, of starkness, liteness, and insignificance. Overhead the stars gleam, far-off and coldly unsympathetic. I shiver, and increase my pace. Comes the thought of the illimitable distances represented by the depths of space. It awes and appalls me. Those supercilious stars, the contemptuous moon riding the sky, the vague and

futile clouds, the immobile cliff, and the insane sea—all these combine to produce in me a depression of futility, transiency, and insignificance. And then I remember that, after all, immensity and apparent enduringness are not the real measures of worth. I do not understand Einstein, nor have I met anyone who does, but I do see that mere size is only relative, and that I am myself intolerably immense in comparison with some other forms of life. Further, I see that quality and meaning are the real measures of worth, and I remember that I am related to God, the Maker of all these “swift and bright immensities.” I begin to recover my self-respect and sense of security. The diamonds sprinkled in the blue-black dome above twinkle merrily and friendly. They are God’s stars; but I am God’s child. The rising moon speaks of a sun which, though absent to my view, is in its proper place and about its proper business. What has wrought the change in my outlook and feelings? First, the briskness of my walk, incited by the night chill, has set my blood coursing, and has cleansed with the fresh air my stagnant brain. Further, I have risen to a spiritual challenge, and overcome the disagreeable circumstances by accepting them.

I have won freedom through adjustment. I am at peace again. I have a different kind of comfort now, but it is at once a more healthful and scriptural comfort. I am braced, stimulated, enlarged.

So it has been more than once, and so it may well be again and again, in the process of our understanding of God, the world, and ourselves. Mankind, like Abraham, has often been obliged to go forth in its thinking, not knowing whither; but the pilgrimage has always been toward a promised land. Men have resented the impulse that thrust them out; but the net result has always been gain.

The extension of our universe in time and space is the most elementary illustration of this "vaster" in religious thought. The universe of the biblical writers was geocentric; sun, moon, and stars were utilities and decorations for this earth and its inhabitants. The universe of our fathers became heliocentric; this earth with the planets revolved about the sun, which was believed to be the chief of all the heavenly bodies. Now we know that our entire solar system is but one out of many such systems, and, as a unit, is itself swinging in an incalculable orbit about an unknown center. The immensities repre-

sented by the mere size and the distance of some of the heavenly bodies shock and appall us. The mind reels and the spirit shivers as at some infinite nightmare. On the other hand, the immensity of the infinitely little is just as intolerable in a reverse direction. All microscopic illustrations are otiose in comparison with the conceptions demanded by the new theories of matter which subdivide the ultimate atom into a microcosm of whirling electrons as far apart from each other relatively as are some of the stars. Now all this is disturbing to those who crave a neat and handy conception of things in general. Yet there is no reason why it should be so. Size, whether in the immensely big or the infinitely small, is only relative, after all. But what is of import to us is that the bigger the universe, the greater the Mind of the Infinite Thinker and the Might of the Infinite Will.

So with the extension of our thought of the age of the earth and of man. The one thing certain here is that the race is much more ancient than our fathers suspected, working on a basis of biblical chronology—chronology being probably the least certain thing in Scripture. But why worry? What difference does it make whether God took thou-

sands, or millions of years to develop man? The thing of vital import and inexhaustible significance is that man is in being, and that he has become both self-conscious and God-conscious. Is it not a distinct gain to us, fussy little impertinences, to be forced to conceive of God's age-long patience and confidence? Evolution is still being debated by the scientists, not as to the fact, but as to the manner. Most religious people have calmly accepted the fact as probably true, and find nothing in it but an expansion of the marvel of creation.

The same principle holds in connection with the changed attitude to Scripture. It is very difficult for the ordinary person to realize that what is now the old-fashioned conception of inspiration as involving such a verbal infallibility as would make the Bible all dogma to be humbly received without scrutiny, is a comparatively modern growth. Students are well aware that the conception of the Bible as dogma to be believed without being questioned is a creation of post-Reformation times. The scholars of all the Christian ages have known differently. It is no Satan-inspired spirit of skepticism, but the Renaissance spirit of scrutiny that recognized in the

Scriptures themselves the infallible signs of a religious literature rather than an authoritative body of dogma. There is no denying that such a discovery acts like a cold douche upon many simple, devout souls. A religious literature that calls for discrimination, that needs at once the Holy Spirit's illumination and the alert human intelligence if its wealth is to become our possession, is apparently a poorer thing than a divinely dictated document of religion. Men are driven by the pressure of stubborn facts, but they go reluctantly. When once the inevitable has been reckoned with, however, it is found that we move in a larger, freer, more bracing climate. The mere deliverance from the necessity of teasing and coaxing obstreperous facts and conceptions into some kind of consistent system, is an immense gain. The real consistency of the Scriptures is the consistency of growth, and a growth more like the course of an evolution than of the life history of any particular organism.

All this is getting to be an old story. Most of us have long since ceased to be disturbed by, but, rather, rejoice in the freedom and stimulation of, the larger-scale conceptions. There is, however, another relation in which

the process of adjustment is at present in operation, and we are feeling the discomfort and nervous unsettlement that is inevitable. Modern psychologic theory and practice are impinging upon religion's special sphere of spiritual experience, and threatening to resolve that into a more or less natural interaction of psychic laws. What we have hitherto held to be a direct putting forth of divine power in a supernatural process can be, it is declared, reproduced without any specific reference to God and apart from the principles recognized in orthodox theology. It is, at least to the writer, undeniable that systems of suggestion, obvious like Couéism or disguised like Christian Science, New Thought, and the like, do produce something very like the Christian freedom, joy, and power in life. If it be demurred that really striking and persistent cases of this are rare, I must point out, what is at once regrettable and undeniable, that really good examples of the complete and abiding Christian experience are also comparatively rare. One may say that the practice of self-development and self-control by auto-suggestion does not amount to religion. One might be able to show that it does not produce the full measure

of power for life that Christian faith does, or that faith accomplishes it more readily, or more easily in the case of the person of average culture. Nevertheless, the fact that so much can be done, and that an experience so (to be cautious) essentially similar to the spiritual life of the typical Christian can be obtained and maintained calls for explanation. Whether we want to or not, we shall be driven to think these things together into some unity of conception.

You may say, if you are not a convinced believer in the Christian faith, that religion merely calls facts and laws by artificial names, and accomplishes in a rule-of-thumb way, suited to an uneducated people, what is done more systematically and economically by the new psychology. Or, being perchance a Christian, you may say that the New Thought adept is dealing actually, though unconsciously, with the living God, using divine laws and drawing upon divine resources while hiding this from himself by a sonorous, quasi-scientific, imitation-religious terminology. In either case you imply that the religious and the psychologic are not two rival processes, but fundamentally one, differing chiefly in phraseology and angle of

approach. That would imply the advisability of the scientific mind thinking its theories through to their ultimate implications in a personal God interested in men, and the religious mind acknowledging that God uses certain definite processes in the life of man which are susceptible of consideration as natural laws of the human spirit. What is clearly not possible, or at least not warrantable, is the assertion that the religious and psychologic are necessarily hostile or radically alien. They must be essentially related, and so there is an obligation upon us in our thinking and talking to have them equated.

This is the live problem for the religious thinkers of the present. I prophesy that it will be much in evidence in the literature of the immediate future. But though it be newly envisaged, the material is quite old. The mystic has had his place in all the Christian ages, and he has always been more or less independent of the particular contemporary orthodoxy. Even though he, or she, found indorsation for theological doctrine in ecstatic states, these always seemed to be stuck on their essential experience rather as one puts a stamp on a letter, to validate its circulation. Usually the mystics have been

looked askance upon on account of a deplorable doctrinal freedom or doctrinal indefiniteness.

Probably God does not mind a great deal how people think about it, nor what formulæ they use to describe it, so long as they do find life and power and peace. We may well believe that nothing can help the soul to reach and find God like the gospel of Christ, and that the most scientific conception and manipulation of psychical laws must be something less effective. But the imperfect and roundabout way may be the proper way for certain imperfect and oblique-minded people. And then God must have an infinite sense of humor, and it will call rather for a divine smile of sympathetic comprehension rather than for the frown of offended majesty when some of his children cultivate their souls in the New Thought fashion, for lack of better understanding. This, for instance, is not a hilarious caricature, but a choice morsel printed on the cover of a book as an attractive sample of the contents: “The life which is moving in the natural, which is the God-appointed way, comes in contact with, and commands the use of, those high intelligences and Spirit-informed and vitalized forces of both

worlds, which, working with infinitely fine tools in a medium of unexplainable potency and responsiveness, bring forth mightily." Admittedly that is a beautiful example of verbal slush, yet the fact remains that some curious people do find help through it!

Indeed, the only reason why there is a vogue for that kind of thing, as well as for the saner art of self-control by suggestion, is that Christian people have not learned to make use of the power and liberty presented by the gospel. What Christianity has preached as an ideal Christian people have rediscovered as a possibility, because they have seen it demonstrated in those who did not go after it in the Christian way, and yet have achieved it more or less completely.

Does it not all come to this, that God works on a vaster scale than we can conceive, and that between the limits which we set up and the real limitations of divine activity there is a large margin wherein men may find reality and enter into relations with it, though apparently out of conformity with the theological definitions of formal Christian doctrine. Let us make up our minds to this: No life finds enrichment and enlargement by contact with inner realities without touching God.

ESTABLISHING LAW

"LAW" was a term in one of Paul's controversies. With modified meaning, it is a term in a live difference of opinion to-day. In Paul's thought it stood for a morality constituted in a ceremonial system. For us it represents the system of principles governing phenomena. "The laws of nature," "The law of gravity," "The law of causation"—these are more or less familiar phrases. They crystallize the results of several centuries of observation, experimentation, and thought into the scientific belief in the universal reign of law. Nothing just happens; everything is caused. The application of this belief to the realm of the soul aroused considerable resistance. We remember the bitter resentment manifested in religious circles at the publication of Professor Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. We may criticize his special construction of his thesis; but most thoughtful people would agree that the spiritual realm is no anarchy, but is as truly governed by eternal principles as any other realm of the universe. This no more dispenses with

the grace of God than the laws of matter and force waive the necessity for a constant divine activity in nature.

The conception of spiritual law is familiar. Yes; but it cannot be said that we have digested it. In truth, a good deal of religious confusion is due to this, that such conceptions are familiar without having been worked into place in consistent thought. So we have the situation that the reign of law is acknowledged as complete while at the same time it is believed that God can and does dispense with it. Beyond the mysteriousness of known laws there are, it is said, mystic and incalculable possibilities. Thus it is sometimes held that prayer operates in a region above mere laws, even spiritual laws. The Holy Spirit overrides the ordinary laws of mind and soul. I have no use for any mere bandying of opinions, but I think I see that it is going to make considerable difference to the future of Christendom whether we take one or the other view, or rest content in ambiguity. At any rate, those who believe whole-heartedly in the dominance of law will seek to understand and use the principles of religious life, not because they trust law rather than God but because they see that

God's laws are God's pathways whereupon they may meet with him and co-operate with him.

It was inevitable that there should be difficulty in reconciling the ancient and well-founded belief in prayer with the new assertion of the universality of law. That was partly because men were too quick to assume that they knew all the laws of the universe. We are not much troubled by that old question now. The most remarkable answer to prayer does not involve the supernatural. Really the word "supernatural" is superannuated. How, let us ask, can we longer speak of the supernatural, when once we have recognized our inability to delimit the natural?

There is, however, confusion in regard to the place of prayer in effort for the extension of the Kingdom. It is held that prayer may bring about an activity of the Holy Spirit independent of any laws of the spiritual life in man. But careful study of religious experience suggests more and more strongly that law is supreme here as truly as in the material world. There has been intensive study of spiritual experience by trained and sympathetic observers. They find definite

sequences from observed causes in given conditions. As a practical result we have the program of religious education in the assurance that if we can provide the proper conditions for the growing personality, divine forces will certainly engage with human instincts to the production of Christian personality.

From this movement a certain type of Christian is repelled on account of an apparently mechanical character which is thought to be indicated. This dislike is helped, may we suggest, by an unfortunate tinge of complacent self-assurance in some of the textbooks. Instead of this program of sustained and systematic effort calling for trained and consecrated experts, the older type of Christian places his confidence in prayer and the Holy Spirit. He suspects that the newer methods displace or ignore the Holy Spirit. They may be all right in their place—a quite subordinate place: but the supremely important activity for Christians is prayer, and the only adequate means of salvation is the direct action of God. That is the issue in the new controversy of Law vs. Grace. But it is not a clear issue. The terms are not mutually exclusive. When we look carefully at them we

see that if they are not exactly convertible, they certainly overlap.

Here I would digress for a moment. The churches are in the habit of calling their membership to concerted prayer, in connection with their periodical drives and campaigns. That is obviously right. But a mere demand for prayer may not accomplish much, seeing that so many people do not know what to make of prayer. I do not complain that they have no consistent and complete philosophy of it. Who has? But they do not know how to pray because they are not sure whether specific petition is justified, or, if it is, whether it is to be claimed with bold confidence, or presented tentatively to the superior and corrective wisdom of God. Otherwise an exercise of vague vocalized religious emotion does not attract any except a particular type. By the way, much of the literature circulated by the churches in connection with their organizational spasms tends rather to discount and deprecate the element of specific petition in prayer.

The point of perplexity appears when we are urged to pray in order that the Holy Spirit may operate in a special way upon individuals and communities. Preaching,

teaching, and organization are, we are told, subordinate though useful, but the direct action of the Holy Spirit is of supreme importance. Now, this involves a serious assumption. What is the underlying principle upon which men pray that God will revive his work of grace? Is it not that there is something God could do, which would certainly bring about the salvation of men, which yet he is not doing, and which he will not do unless we sufficiently beseech him? Here I would be sorry to use language that might hurt anyone, but I am anxious to be fair and explicit. We have all heard language used in prayer meetings which crudely expressed that belief, and we have heard and read the same thing stated more guardedly. Whether crudely or carefully said, the thing is monstrous. But that it is preposterous, we would feel it to be blasphemous. Are we more concerned for souls than is God their Maker and Redeemer? Do we have to persuade him? Could we respect God, if we could conceive of Almighty Grace viewing the possibility of intervening in the sinner's course of sin, and not doing it, whether besought in prayer or not? Our human prayers may be in some way necessary to the application of the divine grace,

but in spite of all the anthropomorphisms in the Old Testament, or the New either, prayer is *not* required to stir God up to be gracious.

But if not, then its function must relate to the modification of human conditions. This is only to say that prayer operates within the sphere of spiritual law, and not independently of it. It is one factor in a realm controlled by stable principles. But what perversity of thought is this that would set spiritual laws in antagonism, or at least in antithesis to the direct action of God the Holy Spirit! What a curious power words have to blind us to the very reality they denote! What is any law, whether of nature, mind, or soul, but the direct action of God? When we use the word we refer to the regularity we observe in the universe, so that happenings are processes and not mere sequences. A "law" is nothing in itself; it is only the label for our subjective conception. What it objectively represents is the habitual and systematic activity of God. It is this regularity, the fact that things happen so and not otherwise, the obvious "directivity" in nature, that is impossible to account for on materialistic grounds, and which increasingly forces science to the acknowledgment of

God. God does what he does by law always. There is no caprice in him; he is the supreme Methodist. Spiritual law *is itself* the immediate power and grace of God.

The churches have surprised themselves lately by the discovery that adolescence is really the harvest time of conversion, and that afterward life tends to set hard, so that the chances of conversion after a given age are, statistically speaking, remote. Of course the churches have always known that children are more responsive to religious influence than adults, but they are only beginning to act intelligently upon that knowledge. It may be that, with the concentration of attention upon the children, adults will be to some extent neglected. That would be a mistaken reaction, which would have to be corrected. The law of adolescent sensitiveness with subsequent establishment of character explains why work among adults has been so comparatively disappointing. It shows that adult conversion is exceptional rather than normal. I would suggest that this does really need to be emphasized from the pulpit. It is complained that preaching lacks an element of solemnity that characterized the work of our forbears, and which is necessary to the propa-

gation of religion. Damnation has almost ceased to be mentioned from the pulpit. Is that because it was associated exclusively with death and the hereafter? That seems to be a reaction, not so much from the tragic element in human fate, as from a misplacement of emphasis on death and the hereafter. It is not death that men should be afraid of, and not the hereafter upon which attention should be fixed, but life and the laws of life. For life is quite as inexorable in its dealings with us as any angry Omnipotence judging and punishing sinners. Only it is not a matter of a tribunal in the distant future, but a moral process in the living present. The laws of the soul, constituted by God for our spiritual development, increasingly tend to destroy the soul that will not respond and learn. Men should be urged to personal religion because every year of indifference lessens the possible power of that radical readjustment of life called in Scripture regeneration. The soul's peril is not so much that a man may die suddenly without repenting, but that he may live long enough to be past the possibility of it. Was not this what the Lord meant in speaking of an unpardonable sin?

There is, further, a division of opinion in

the religious world over the place of intelligent conviction in personal religion. Now, nothing is more certain than that our inner life, whether we call it mind or soul, has its controlling laws. Mental activities are classed under the heads of thought, feeling, and will, and we do not know of any element of the inner life that does not come within the sphere represented by these terms. Recent thinking has concerned itself with a mysterious realm called the subconscious; but even here, though the conditions vary from the normal, we are still dealing with thought, feeling, and will. Normally, in thought we apprehend reality; feeling expresses our valuation of reality; and in will we react to reality. Religiously we have thoughts, conceptions, judgments of God, the world, and ourselves. Out of such elements come the moral judgment upon ourselves that we call conviction of sin, accompanied with the feeling of self-disgust. Repentance and faith are acts of will, re-enforced by feeling, in relation to our sins, on the one hand, and to God on the other. There are no experiences in all the Christian life which do not fall within the limits of these normal processes. It has been believed, however, that the Holy spirit can

and does affect the soul in some way apart from these. In fact, it is felt to be derogatory to the work of God to think of it taking place through any laws. Men have called conversion miraculous, and quoted Christ's words to Nicodemus in support. They forget that we do know in these days whence the wind comes and whither it goes, and also largely why it comes and goes. Spiritual processes may not be understood; that is not to say they are essentially nonunderstandable.

In normal life thought is primary. It is possible to produce feeling by various forms of suggestion and to get a spasmodic action upon it. But just because this feeling and action are not rooted in personal vision of reality it evaporates when the suggestion is withdrawn. There has for some time been a tendency to ignore the need for a basis in intelligent conviction of the truth of religion, on the assumption that it is the way of the Spirit to reach the conscience through some mysterious channel. It is commonly supposed that our religious predecessors discounted the appeal through the intelligence. How do they read history who would have us believe that our religious pioneers distrusted cogency of reasoning in preaching? John

Wesley, that keen intellect, with his scornful words about what were then, and still are, praised as "gospel sermons," whose collected works stand as models of cogent reasoning for all time—he at least would have none of this mystic religion divorced from intelligent conviction. No one knew better that a religiosity without a stiff spine and solid standing ground is a poor soluble mush.

One does not have to go to the industrial centers of the Old Land, where rationalism is rife, to discover the results of the milk diet in religion, and the need for strong meat. Here also it is to be seen, though it is quite possible to miss it, if one does not care to look for it. There is a surprising amount of disbelief among cultured people in just those elements of the gospel that give Christianity its distinctive value and message. There is also, in rural centers, where the church and its services have formed part of the life of the community for generations, an alarming absence of the sense that Christianity is *true*. We ought to have been alert to this long before it was forced upon our attention by the significant report of the Canadian Chaplains. We are suffering from cheap work in the pulpit.

I believe in prayer, and I believe in the Holy Spirit. Without the co-operation of God through effective prayer our best efforts fail miserably. Pray for wisdom, tact, and especially energy. Pray, for so only can the right atmosphere prevail. But do not pray to "move the arm of God," or to secure by miracle what God only undertakes to do through the orderly processes of the soul's life. Let us firmly grasp the truth that God works always by law. Our prayers and God's grace move *within* law, if they accomplish anything at all. The more we understand spiritual law the better we will be able to fulfill our task as "coworkers with God."

CREATING A SOCIAL INSTINCT

THE real task for those who believe in the possibility of a better humanity is that of the creation of a new social instinct. Unless this can be done, nothing will avail to prevent fresh strife breaking out between the nations and the classes.

There has never yet been strife between or within nations which was not the evil fruit of the exploiting spirit. Once rulers, or the ruling classes, were the guilty parties, and subject peoples were the victims. It is alleged that recent wars have sought commerce rather than glory, and that in them the plutocracies have been the criminals, and the wage-earners the injured. Now, a new thing arises in this distracted earth. The workers have discovered their power, and propose to use it with as ruthless savagery as ever did kings or capitalists. Their endeavor is to inaugurate the Marxian class warfare, and to achieve the supremacy of the underdogs. It is just a question whether it is possible to "make democracy safe for the world." Who can deny that it would be a case of poetic justice if the workers of the nations, the world over, with or without a reign of terror,

were to shut out from privilege and persecute all classes other than the artisan? It would indeed seem hardly fair if the workers of the world were deprived of their innings in the age-long game of tyranny! At any rate there are elements in the situation to cause uneasy thinking among foresighted men.

For we are still in the grip of barbarism so long as any nation or class proposes to exploit the rest of the world for its own advantage or greater glory. And there will be no real improvement in social relations without the establishment of a democracy which shall be a co-operation of all classes for the common welfare. The World War and its aftermath of confusion have only uncovered the sores of age-long disease. The real problem underlies all questions of international relations and frontiers. It could not be dealt with by any peace conference. Yet it must be dealt with sooner or later by all the nations together and by each separately. Otherwise the old sequence of events will repeat itself to the undoing of generations to come. The interests of certain classes will conflict with the desires of certain others, and there will be further spasms of "unavoidable" collective homicide.

There is only one thing which can switch humanity off the old track on to the new, without derailing the whole train. That is the creation of a new social instinct among men. The word "instinct" is consciously chosen. An ideal is not sufficient. Ideals are of necessity dreams, castles in the clouds, heavenly visions. That is not to depreciate them. It simply recognizes that a reform must begin as a thought. It cannot become born as a reform, however, unless it can be transformed into a movement, an organization, and finally an instinct. The question as to whether it is possible by conscious effort to produce such a social instinct will be argued presently. But if it cannot be done, then we may as well cease our striving to cure humanity of its madness, and confine our efforts to providing straitwaistcoats and keeping them in readiness for the convulsions that are bound to occur every now and again.

Socialists have for long asserted, and the world has generally come to believe that any approach to a worthy and healthy state of human affairs will involve a more or less radical alteration in the economic system. However, some of the leaders in the social-reform movement have recently made advance upon

this. They see, and declare with no uncertain voice, that no merely economic alteration will meet the need, if there is not a corresponding alteration in the general social spirit. That is a noteworthy step forward. It brings the whole question of social reform into intimate relations with the aims and methods of the churches. If it be followed up, it may lead to what is greatly to be desired, namely, a co-operation between them and the social movement that shall do away with a patronizing benevolence on the one hand and a suspicious tolerance on the other.

It is essential to the establishment of a rational social order that there shall be a background of social loyalty, a developed instinct for social duty, above and beyond any demand for rights. The more truly rational become the relations between men in the social order, the greater will be the demands made upon such a reservoir of loyalty to the community. It is the general lack of this asset which brings to confusion so many splendid endeavors. This, then, is what must be called into being as the indispensable prerequisite of social reconstruction. But is it possible to create such a spirit?

In the preface to *Ecce Homo*, Sir J. R.

Seeley has a suggestive passage in which he stresses the function of organized societies for the production of just such social instincts. "Without a society, and an authority of some kind, morality remains speculative and useless." So the function of the state is not merely to punish wrongdoing, or even to overawe the would-be criminal with legal threats and police force, but to create an instinctive honesty, so that if a man be caught in a theft, he shall not only suffer penalty inflicted by the court but shall *feel* disgraced. The phrase *esprit de corps* contains within itself the principle that any intimate association of personalities tends to impose upon the members of the society as an instinct the moral code, or the etiquette, characteristic of the society as a whole. Thus "an army . . . develops the virtues of manly courage and subordination, not in a few favorable cases only, but with an almost irresistible power through its whole body." The Christian Church, as Sir J. R. Seeley conceives it, exists to do for the Christian ethic what the state does for honesty, and armies do in regard to courage. It cultivates the Christian spirit as an atmosphere, in order that it may reproduce it as an instinct. In this way the church is to

serve as the means for the establishment of the kingdom of God. It is true that none of these agencies can claim to have fulfilled its function. There is dishonesty in spite of the state. There are cases of cowardice in all armies. And the churches have fallen a long way short of their aim in imposing the law of Christ upon the lives of their members as a whole. Nevertheless, much has been accomplished by these means that could not have been achieved without them. At least they go to show that it is possible to turn an ideal into an instinct, given sufficient will and wisdom.

Much has been written about the propaganda by which German leaders created an idea of the state and instilled it as an instinct into the very soul of the people. It need not be supposed that German rulers began, forty years before the Great War, with a cut-and-dried program, to produce the precise results which eventuated. It is conceivable that the program grew as the propaganda grew. What is certain is that an intelligent, persistent, and ramified endeavor was made to cultivate an instinctive subordination of the individual to the supremacy of the state. How successful it was we have had occasion

to realize. No mere ideal could have held the German people together through nearly four years of such strain, or enabled them to approve of military methods that roused the rest of the world to shuddering wrath. A very thoroughgoing ingenuity was exercised, which seized upon the educational institutions, the churches, and the press, and made them serve its purpose. Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* was in use as a textbook, the writer found, in a seminary for the training of school-teachers. Exactly the same spirit and methods are being used by the military party in the United States upon the schools and colleges at the present time. Von Bernhardt's utterances can be matched with just as callously truculent statements by representatives of American militarism.

The German effort to manufacture a diabolical "*kultur*" has been sufficiently condemned. But have we sufficiently admired its sagacity, and have we understood its significance for the social problems of the wide world? If German system, thoroughness, and persistence have been prostituted to hateful ends and to the injury of all humanity, the thoroughness and persistence and sagacity are none the less admirable. If Germany

could, by patient, long-continued effort, transform into an instinct a false ideal, we can create an instinct upon a true and healthful social principle, given only the will and the sagacity. It is true that an autocracy, being a form of unified command, can set afoot with celerity and efficiency schemes of reform or of policy, which are apt to gather momentum slowly in a democratic state. The abolition of the trade in intoxicants in Russia by the ukase of the Czar may be compared with the lame progress of the prohibition movement in the United States or Canada, in this connection. Yet who will assert that there is not the will and the wisdom to enterprise the most colossal social crusade, when once it is seen to be called for in our more democratic countries?

This is, indeed, a work for governments. It cannot be attempted except through the powers of an enlightened and energetic government. But as governments are always merely the instruments (when they are not the impediments) of movements, there must first be a union of all who see and can express the need. The thought of this chapter is therefore thrown out in the hope that it may serve as one seed for such a harvest. There

is plenty of vision and effort toward this end, but it is bound up with sectional movements that disunite forces and scatter energy.

The program of all-round culture for teenage boys and girls, jointly sponsored by the churches and the Y. M. C. A. in Canada, is a magnificent endeavor in this direction. That it has made such strides in the few years of its existence argues for its fitness no less than its acceptability. It aims at bringing the idea of completeness of manhood, in the four aspects of the mental, physical, religious, and social, before the mind of our youth in the most attractive way. The original idea has been widened in scope, with the purpose of applying it to all parts of the life and work of the community. In fact the movement has become so extensive that it appears impossible for the churches to carry it through. To realize its possibilities the churches, all educational institutions, and every group interested in a better future for the world, should join forces and pool their inspiration, and ideas, and energies. That will not happen, however, until it is clearly seen that a new social instinct is the only safeguard for the future, and therefore for the present.

The elaboration of a program must be the

work of the experts. Let it suffice here to emphasize the necessary aim. That is to reduce an ideal to an instinct, so that whoever fails to fill a man's place, and render a man's contribution to the community shall be disgraced in his own consciousness. But such an instinct would function as an incentive far more than as a conscience. Ideals afflict us with a depressed humility; instincts move us to courageous activity.

A realized social instinct will give effect to a double obligation—of self-development and of self-giving. No one can fill a man's place who does not attain a man's stature. The slacker in self-development robs the community. Think what it would mean in increase of human efficiency if all students realized this. Have there not been colleges dominated by so perverse an atmosphere that the studious student was ostracized as a prig? Physical culture would fall into its right place as providing a sound organism charged with life-energy. There is plenty of opportunity for self-development in all directions, but the response to the available opportunity is disappointing.

Self-culture is, however, only the necessary condition of service. We must make the best

of ourselves, because otherwise we cannot render our due contribution to the health and prosperity of the community. Individuals are unwilling, because they are unable, to take their share of responsibility in the affairs of the community and the nation. Is it not becoming more and more obvious that the radical improvements called for at this juncture in human progress demand a new consciousness of social responsibility and a new willingness to take up a share in the social burden?

William James proposed as an equivalent of military service the conscription of the whole youthful population for a certain number of years for compulsory national service of an industrial, agricultural, or other useful kind. The idea has been recently worked out in most interesting form as a story in one of the popular magazines. It would be hard to conceive of any plan more likely to create the sense of solidarity, the unit's responsibility to the whole, and the state's responsibility for the fullest education of the individual. This is all very Utopian. That is only to say that it is a condition of things considerably in advance of the present.

The apathetic and myopic spirit declares

that this is all very well, but human nature being what it is, such proposals must remain speculative ideals. And that is true, if human nature must inevitably remain as it is. Unless an instinct can be created, radical improvement is indeed an impossible dream. The world had stolidly accepted the idea that social instincts must grow slowly, following social states as effect follows cause. Germany's experiment in the production of a powerful though false conception of social relations has at least shown that it can be done. If she could do it to serve a diabolical scheme of world-exploitation, other nations can do it to create the necessary instinct for the establishment of a commonwealth of humanity. The world is ready for a big advance. Society has been shaken out of its ruts. The heroic spirit is abroad in the earth. There has never been so favorable an opening for large, statesmanlike, and courageous plans. The citizen instinct must be called into being, for it is essential to a real democracy. It can be created. But it can be produced only by an effort at least as far-sighted, courageous, sagacious, and persistent, as that which made the German people the willing servants of insane autocracy.

THE "SIMPLE" GOSPEL

EVERY now and again someone expresses a strong preference for what is called the "simple" gospel. Often enough this implies a quite guileless perplexity in face of our enlarged and involved thought world. That is understandable, and we cannot but sympathize with it. Occasionally, however, it is an oblique sneer at what people do not like; they dislike it because they do not understand it; and they do not understand it because they cannot be bothered to make the effort. In such case the expression indicates a fundamental misapprehension, not only of the modern religious outlook but of the gospel itself.

The gospel of Christ is not simple—no! not in any shape or form or manner. Still less is it "simple" in the artificial sense implied by the expression quoted, when that has the censorious tone. To get the issue sharp and clear at the outset I will venture to say that Christ's gospel is not simple, and the "simple" gospel is not Christ's. If that sounds either superfluous or erroneous, let anyone prepared to scrutinize the facts consider them afresh.

Let me be frankly personal here. I know this "simple" gospel; I was brought up on it. I have been acquainted with many genuine saints who adhered to it, though whether the reality of their religious experience was due to its peculiar "simplicity" or came into being in spite of it might be debated. I have also met many partisans of it remarkably unamiable in disposition and repellent in words and works. If the beauty of its saints commends it, the quality of its partisans offsets that commendation, so that in the end we must estimate it on the basis of its correspondence with simple truth.

For the sake of fair play let us give the most sympathetic description possible of the "simple" gospel as a conception. It takes the point of view of a preacher who is dealing with a life-long sinner on his deathbed, for whom the opportunity of service to God is past and gone. Such an one must be pointed to the mercy of God in Jesus Christ and assured that God will forgive and receive simply on condition of faith in Christ. So far the simple gospel is true and scriptural. But it is an error of far-reaching and calamitous import if anyone supposes, first, that that is a complete statement of Christ's gospel, and,

second, that the sinner repenting on his deathbed represents a normal case of conversion. The "simple" gospel, it may be said quite sympathetically, is chiefly concerned with the forgiveness of sins and the hope of heaven after death. It is a curious and not insignificant fact that whenever the "simple" gospel proceeds further, even upon its own lines, and tries to go into the why and how, then it immediately ceases to be simple at all, and becomes weird and complicated, and crudely revolting.

Painful experience has taught me that those who violently and censoriously profess this attitude do so, perhaps unconsciously, for this reason. The deathbed penitent is promised salvation on faith in Christ, although for him there can be no possibility of following Christ in this life. "Simple-gospelers" are attracted by a religion that does not stress the necessity of discipleship in any inexorable way. They wish to have all the benefits of Christ's salvation without having to strive and serve as subjects of his Kingdom here. The dying sinner *cannot* follow, and serve, and obey Christ here; therefore they feel that they *need* not. The "simple" gospel is very fond of dying-sinner illustra-

tions, as you may have observed. Unfortunately, it tends to be merely a dying-sinner gospel. In practice this gospel is "simple" in the sense of being easy, cheap, comfortable. It makes no demand for effort. Indeed, it strenuously decries effort. "Lay your deadly doing down; doing ends in death," and "Jesus did it, did it all, long, long ago," represent its taste in hymns. No wonder that inert human nature wishes to postpone religion, if it thinks that believing in Jesus now it must follow him, while if it waits until the end of life it can be saved and go to heaven just the same without the trouble of following Christ through life.

This "simple," substitutionary, passive gospel determined the religious atmosphere of my own childhood. There was a time when it was impossible for me to conceive of anything different. Consequently, when I began to be conscious of religion and to read the New Testament with attention, what painfully impressed me was the difference, amounting to contradiction, between this "simple" gospel, and the teaching of Jesus. Jesus affirmed what the "simple" gospel denied; the "simple" gospel centered its attention on what Christ treated casually and

incidentally. For the "simple" gospel, faith is the acceptance of an alleged divine "scheme" or "plan" of salvation. In the teaching of Christ faith is a personal allegiance to himself that works out in the thinking of his thoughts and the service of his Kingdom. In the "simple" gospel salvation costs nothing; according to Christ it costs everything. With the "simple" gospel the believer is converted through a passive faith; afterward it is open, but optional, to him to go in for the "higher life" if he likes. With Christ, the believer enters into the Kingdom by heroic obedience to him as its King; upon that he finds moral vitality flowing into his life through his fellowship with his Lord. According to the "simple" gospel the "rock" upon which the saved soul stands is the "finished work of Christ"; according to the explicit and emphatic statements of Christ himself, it is the "doing" of the "things which I say." The "simple" gospel emphasizes Christ as Saviour; the New Testament emphasizes Christ as Lord: that is, it presents him as Saviour to those who accept him as Lord, but insists that there is no possibility of Christ becoming a Saviour except to those who will make him Lord.

Plainly, if the "simple" gospel be true, then the teachings of Christ are unorthodox; while if Christ's words be our final authority, the "simple" gospel is an unworthy and pernicious heresy. If further evidence were needed that the latter alternative represents the true case, it is to hand. *Something* is responsible for the generally inert condition of the churches, for the fact that religious communities remain so disappointingly in a condition of average respectable human nature, and that so much external manipulation of the American scientific-publicity sort is required to secure support for any good cause. I here register my personal conviction that it is this "simple" gospel preached and believed and acted out that is directly responsible, and I indict it in the name of the Lord as the present-day heresy. It is perfectly wonderful how quickly people do resent a plain exposition of the plain words of Christ about the plain conditions of salvation. But since the story of religion through the ages has been a recurrence of conflict between insurgent genuine religion and conventional complacent religion, this recalcitrancy should not surprise, and may even encourage us.

It is interesting to find how a leader like John Wesley was himself hindered by the same tendency, and had to fight the use of almost the same phrase. In his time the catchword was "Gospel sermons," and he had some caustic things to say about it. "I find more profit in sermons on either good tempers or good works than in what are vulgarly called 'Gospel sermons.' That term has now become a mere cant word. I wish none of our Society would use it. It has no determinate meaning. Let but a pert self-sufficient animal with neither sense nor grace bawl out something about Christ, or his blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers cry out, 'What a fine gospel sermon!' Surely, the Methodists have not so learned Christ! We know no gospel without salvation from sin." Those acquainted with Wesley's sermons will not need to be reminded that with him, "salvation from sin" meant more than escape from its consequences, and included always Christ's message of salvation to personal righteousness. The fact is, we are afflicted in our generation also with what Wesley used to call "antinomianism," that is, the tendency to avoid the moral demand of God, and to seek the benefits of his grace without the doing of

his will. "Christianity is more than morality, but never less than morality," a noted English divine said recently. The "simple" gospel is distinctly and by principle shy of morality, and that is why the standard of Christian living is in practice so far below the principles of Jesus. The same preacher added his conviction, to which I humbly say Amen: "I do not expect to see a real revival of the Christian religion without a large increase in ethical leadership." That involves a new stress upon the moral implications of faith in Christ.

In regard to the personal cost of entrance into the kingdom of God, Christ could not possibly have been more explicit. It would seem that instead of teasing and persuading and suggestionizing people into the Kingdom like an expert modern evangelist, he deliberately pushed them back and warned them off. Now the "simple" gospel covers all this up. That is why, when it is disclosed, people first complain that they don't understand the preacher, and don't follow his line of thought, and then, when it is forced upon their attention, recoil from it with indignation and allegations of "Christlessness," or "bloodlessness," and strike an injured pose with "They

have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him"!

No; Christ's gospel is decidedly not simple in the sense of being easy and cheap. Nor is it simple, as a matter of plain fact, in the sense of being easy to understand. Throughout his ministry the Lord was wrestling with the practical impossibility of getting the religious experts of his time to think past their bat-minded prepossessions. Not even the inner circle of disciples understood the import of his gospel during his life. The strikingly different interpretations of the gospel made by the first Christian leaders, and recorded in the New Testament witness to the fact that in the gospels we have, not elemental, but essential religion. The various attempts made since Anselm in the thirteenth century to give a coherent account of the redemption wrought by Christ demonstrate that whatever redemption be, it is not simple. Why, the present situation in the theology of the atonement, as every theologian knows, amounts simply to this, that we only know that Christ, in what he was and did, is a bigger fact, and carries a larger significance than our minds can compass.

The New Testament gospel insists that sal-

vation involves obedience to Christ; but is that a "simple" thing? Let those answer who in all seriousness have essayed it. Does anyone profess to know and say offhand just what it would involve to carry out the principles of Jesus in this twentieth century? His teaching was not systematic, but occasional; his ethics give not a code but a spirit. We can only know by going forward with our best blundering wisdom and by learning from our mistakes. The following of Jesus can never be anything else in this world but a fascinating and perilous adventure, in which heroic defeat may be perhaps in the eyes of God the truest success. Was not that Christ's own way of the cross, which he called his followers to tread after him?

The preaching of Christ's gospel to those who only know this "simple" gospel is liable to have devastating results. It cannot do other at first than throw them into confusion. But on the other hand, Christ's gospel is indeed good tidings of great joy to many who have been repelled by the unreality of the "simple" gospel. I speak out of experience when I affirm that there are numbers among us whom the "simple" gospel's shoddy goods revolt, who are ready to meet Christ's simple

demand for personal loyalty with a leap of the spirit.

From the welter and chaos of our time, from its blatant iniquities and its contemptible commonplaceness, there rises a cry to the heavens for vital energetic religion. Now, as through past ages, the gospel of Christ is God's answer to that voiceless cry. "Follow me," said Christ in the days of his flesh. If there is, indeed, a simplicity in his gospel—and, blessed be God, there is!—it lies here, that all the wonder and glory and power of true religion wait upon simple response to that divine appeal. "That voice still soundeth on, from the centuries that are gone, to the centuries that shall be." There is no other way; there is no easier way. If Christ said so, it is so. That is the new and ethical evangelism. It is also the old, old gospel; not the "simple" gospel, but the gospel of Christ, Lord and Saviour of men.

THE GLARE AND THE GLORY

VISITORS to Bermuda find themselves at a loss to explain the peculiar charm of those delightful islands. It is hardly correct to call them beautiful, for beauty seems to imply some element of grandeur, and Bermuda is too tiny for that. There is nothing sensational in the landscape, and the flowers have neither the variety nor the luxuriance of more tropical climes. Nevertheless, there is something indescribably pleasing and satisfying to the mind that is at all responsive to nature. People usually say that it is a matter of atmosphere, meaning by that a combination of artistic prettiness and quaintness. And nothing more is needed, for we do not need to know *how* and *why* a thing pleases us.

The explanation of the peculiar charm of Bermuda is quite simple, however. Because of the extraordinary clearness of the air, combined with the higher altitude of the sun, the whole scale of light values is raised. Photographic exposures must be cut down to half what would be correct for similar subjects in more northern and inland places. Every-

thing is flooded with brilliance, in which the shadows stand out crisply, and the distance, though diminished, is not veiled. This higher light scale has an immediate and positive effect upon the spirits, which, however, people are slow to attribute to its true source. Yet a moment's thought shows how inevitable it is. A dull day depresses us; we feel instinctively that drawn blinds are in accord with occasions of sorrow. After a spell of cloudy weather, a day of clear sunshine makes us "feel good." The extra element of brightness should naturally make us feel better still. And that is what characterizes Bermuda.

All the same, the first effect upon a summer visitor is disagreeable, and even painful, unless he be blessed with especially good eyes. The glare of light reflected from the white roads stabs like a knife. Most persons are obliged to take refuge quickly behind smoked glasses. Of course the native born are not so troubled. The environment has brought about its own adjustment in their case. But they lose something through this very adjustment. They are the only people generally insensitive to the charm of the place. While it is fairyland to others, to them it is only Bermuda—they even corrupt the euphonious

name to something like "B'm-yida"! After an exhibition of lantern pictures in color of their own birthplace, they have been known to confess, "Why, we didn't realize that Bermuda is so pretty!"

"We're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we
have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see."

It would seem that the inconvenience experienced by the transient visitor is the price that must be paid for the possibility of thorough enjoyment. He only feels the charm of the lifted light scale because that is strange to him. To put it crudely—No glare, no glory!

All that by way of illustration. There is something analogous in religion. The gospel comes with a burst of splendor to the man who discovers its reality for himself. The closer his contact with it, the more overwhelming is its glare. It blinded Paul for three days. When his vision was adjusted in the new scale of values created by Christ, he looked upon a world so different that he could only say, "There is a new creation! Old

things have passed away; behold all things have become new.”

In the nature of things a discovery like that must involve mental distress when the upsetting conception smashes in upon our established and commonplace world. The children of piety, natives as it were, of the Kingdom, are apt to miss something of this glare of the Christian revelation, but they are liable to lose something also through their very familiarity. They are not troubled by the glare, but they are not so conscious of the exceeding glory.

Here may be found a key to the present puzzling religious situation. It seems as though Christendom is like an automobile with a slipping clutch. The engine is all right, and the transmission is in order, but somehow it will not take up the load. On the level it runs fairly well, but it stalls on a gradient.

The reality of the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ is the “clutch” of the gospel. When for any reason men fail to be gripped thereby, the gospel chariot creeps forward by a frictional drag, but, as the motorists say, it has no “pull.”

It is indeed surprising that any one could

fail to be astonished at the assumptions of Christianity. Religion in its simplest form is stupendous as the conception of a possible relation between creatures and the Creator, to say nothing of the very existence of one supreme and controlling Mind. The very idea of God as the co-ordinating and controlling force of the universe is an immense relief to our poor minds, tormented by the uncertainty and complexity and confusion of things. But that God should himself enter into humanity through a human personality, and make himself known to men on their own level—that is staggering. It is something antecedently incredible. It may be accepted if it can be shown to be true; then, being accepted, it creates a new range of possibility. But unless that belief can produce its own credentials, it cannot command us. Down on the level of reality the challenge, “Has it your vote to be true?” is out of order. The crucial question is, “Has it a right to my vote?” No mere authority is valid here. The appreciation of spiritual values comes in at a later stage, but the matter of simple truth is primary. Faith climbs the impassable, not by any conception of the spiritually fitting or pleasing, but by the perception of fundamental reality.

Unitarianism has, it may be allowed, a proper place in the Christian scheme of things, as a witness to the staggering nature of orthodox Christian belief that the Man of Nazareth was also the Son of God. Better—infinitely better and more honorable—yes, and also more spiritually sound, that men should halt in the outer court of the temple in honest inability to accept the stupendous implications of the gospel, than that they should press in with shod feet to offer a glib worship. Better that men were blinded by the glare than that they should be blind to the glory!

This insensitiveness to the startling nature of the gospel has been attributed to the debilitating effect of a too easy prosperity. It is equally a product of the state of mind associated with poverty and the confined life. Curiously, it may also follow upon the very success of our modern efforts to propagate religion. The churches are now bent upon the task of a natural evangelism through a normal education. Sensational methods have failed and become repellent. It is not that we have turned from mistaken ways through an accession of wisdom. We are being driven to wiser ways by the ruthless logic of circumstances. The present generation of minis-

ters is largely of the type which is unable to assign any date of conversion. The next generation of church members will probably be of the same stamp, having moved through Sunday school and catechumen class into membership without any violent crisis of repentance and transformation. That is, we confidently believe, both right and necessary. But it will have its own peril, just as revivalism had. It will probably result in a type of Christian so accustomed to the Christian climate that the majesty and marvel of the Kingdom will be hardly felt. At any rate, the science of educational evangelism must concern itself with presenting the gospel to the child mind as infinitely marvelous as well as infinitely natural.

Encouragement may even be found in the very fact of the apparent drift away from religion. The indifference of unbelief is at least a more favorable condition for the spread of the gospel than the apathy of belief. The former may at least be excited into opposition, but the latter cannot be excited at all. It looks as though, for the mass of the people, Christianity will soon have recovered its original quality of strangeness. Then, given the electric spark that is sure to come, we

may see a rediscovery of the gospel on a large scale once more. However disconcerting it may be to suggest that a drift into indifference may actually serve the advance of the Kingdom, it is the more robust faith that can see God in reactions as well as in movements.

Meanwhile, the question for those who are in religion and concerned for it is, "How can *we* attain or retain that sense of the surpassing glory of the gospel, of which our very familiarity tends to rob us?" And the answer is: Through a fresh and deliberate approach to reality as it confronts us in the New Testament, in nature, and in life.

Much of the disturbance of our time is due to this, that men have been making an open-eyed approach to life with the demand to know what it is and what it means. The answer to date, as voiced by the clearest thinkers, is, that life involves a religion of some sort. But many people swerve away from the gospel through misconception and prejudice. They do not make the same kind of approach to it that they willingly make to life. When they become willing they will find the gospel to be the key that belongs to life's lock.

It is not to be expected of all sorts and conditions of men that they should intelligently

investigate religion; but that is certainly a moral obligation upon all those privileged with the modern gift of education. Such owe it to God, themselves, and perhaps most of all to their fellows, that they shall approach Christ with the mind that challenges reality, as well as the soul responsive to it. This is the contribution which the Christian colleges must make to the evangelization of the world in this generation—or any other. They have lain under suspicion of fostering a mental atmosphere unfriendly to evangelism. Inevitably they must create a mental climate unfavorable to certain types of revivalism. But they, and they alone, can create and propagate the type of mind that is both able and willing to deal with the reality of religion. The alert student consciousness has been occupying itself with the needs of the age. At the close of the Great War attention was strongly focused upon social questions. But these have pointed back to the deeper need of a social Saviour. This new recognition of Christ has sprung up largely independently of the churches, and its theology is uncertain. But its aim is upon the center. Whatever happens to the Student Christian Movement, it would seem highly probable that the desired

new religious impetus will come from just such a source, as men of quickened intelligence, and under the sense of world crisis, draw near afresh to the Christ who stands alike in history and in life. Such a rediscovery will involve a shaking up and a stirring up in all our thinking. There will be commotion and aberration and an astonishment. But that will pass. It is only the glare that precedes the glory.

PERMANENCE AND PERMUTATION

It is quite understandably a source of anxiety to some devout souls that Christianity is undergoing changes of more or less marked and serious nature. There is a striking difference in outlook and phraseology and emphasis between the religion of the present and that of a generation ago. Nothing is to be gained by trying to minimize the fact. On the other hand, nothing is likely to be lost by facing it squarely and courageously. To those who inquire in a troubled tone, "What is Christianity coming to?" we respond that it will be found at the close of the twentieth century that the gospel will be the same in essence as it was in the first century, but that in aspect it will be just as different from the first as it has been in each succeeding century of the Christian era. It will be the same because human nature will be the same in its faculties and needs; it will be different because "the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns." It will change in aspect because in a world like this it could not remain the same if it did not change.

And "the more it changes the more it is the same thing."

The cure for uneasiness in regard to the faith once delivered to the saints is to be found in a clear vision of what was, and is, essential and permanent in the gospel, and what accidental and mutable. But, of course, it is practically impossible to get a dozen people to agree on just what is essential and what incidental. A more useful exercise would be to trace some of the great changes through which Christianity has already passed and come down to us undefected in power of revelation and redemption. Then the prospect of present or imminent changes would only appear as further links in the chain, and as signs of life, not decadence. If in our day the church seems somnolent, and the gospel almost like an extinct volcano, we can work on in the faith of a certain fresh eruption, having seen Christianity come to life again at the Reformation after a millennium of apparent death, and after other periods of stagnation breaking forth again among men in its pristine power.

The fallacy of the primitive golden age dies hard. We are prone to imagine that the early church was, in doctrine and practice, all that

a Christian society should be. An attentive reading of the New Testament would disabuse our minds of that. Why, what are the Epistles but hot polemics against all the evils of false thinking and corresponding bad living that have been the bane of religion through the ages? So also we are often exhorted to return to the conditions of pure love and burning enthusiasm and evangelical doctrine of the early Methodists. But Wesley's *Journals* indicate that his whole life was a fight, often a depressing one, against indifference, and uncharity, and fanaticism among the people called Methodists.

The ordinary modern believer would certainly be astonished if he could be taken back and dropped down in the first or second century. He would probably find conditions not only different from his expectations, but much less satisfactory. He would see a number of small groups of disciples united by a common loyalty to Christ and to one another as brethren, but afflicted with latent disharmonies that continually threatened to become patent. Church organization was simple in the extreme. Doctrine as we know it was unformulated, and varieties of interpretation as common as leaders. After the passing of

the apostles there was an unedifying struggle for authority in the church between the presiding elders, called bishops, and certain wandering prophets. The bishops were more like lay leaders than clerics; they were ordained to a special office but were not separated from their fellows, for in the second century we find bishops who were at the same time shepherds, weavers, lawyers, shipbuilders, and so on. The prophets claimed to speak by direct inspiration, and so with the authority of Christ. But it was soon found that some of those who claimed to be prophets were impostors, so that the churches had to make rules and tests to protect themselves. From this struggle came the first consolidation of church organization.

Christian life was dominated by the confident expectation of the imminent bodily return of the Lord, and was increasingly perplexed by the failure of that belief. The great persecutions arose on account of what was at bottom a misunderstanding on the part of the Roman authorities. The distinguishing note of the period was hostility to the prevailing world order, expressed in a passive resistance under persecution that finally broke the will of that decrepit age. Then, with recogni-

tion, safety, and affluence, came rapid degeneration. The early church was crude in thought and imperfect in practice. Nevertheless, whatever we know and enjoy of the gospel, we owe to the literal faithfulness unto death of the primitive Christian societies, through which the faith was handed down to us.

The period that followed lasted roughly for a thousand years, until the Reformation. It was characterized by the growth in power of the organized church, which became centered upon the Bishop of Rome. Its dominant note was that of submission to authority. Its ideal was an organization so powerful that it could control world affairs. But it tried to realize this in ways foreign to the mind of Christ. With safety and affluence came pride and greed. Clericalism developed into sacerdotalism; more and more the priest cast his shadow between the soul and God. Superstition spread like a weed. The Scriptures were buried in a dead language, and the people perished for lack of the truth. Yet the central idea of the period was a true and necessary one. There must be a human society to incarnate the divine idea, powerful through godliness to serve the ends of God,

through which he may work his redemptive will upon mankind at large.

The Reformation was the dawn of a new era. In these days of stress upon religious education it is worth noting that the reformation of religion and its revitalization were made possible through a revival of "learning." Through the new interest in Greek and Latin the gospel was disinterred from its grave, and the Scriptures made available in the common tongue. Humanity broke the ecclesiastical veto upon freedom of personal investigation, and that will never again have power. The Reformers themselves dealt with scripture in a quite free way. But it is not surprising to find that their successors, feeling it necessary to substitute something for the absolute authority of the Pope, began to think of the Bible in an exaggerated and artificial way. The New Testament doctrine of justification by faith, and the reasserted freedom of the mind, were the great gains of this period. Unfortunately, mental freedom was hampered when Calvinism imposed itself upon the intelligence of Protestantism, and the place of personal faith in salvation became obscured by the revolting doctrine of the absolute decrees.

A Protestantism which, after breaking the iron shackles of Rome, could tamely assume these self-imposed fetters doomed itself to sterility. The next vital period came with the Methodist Revival in England. Like Luther, Wesley discovered for himself the evangelical experience, and that impelled him to new courses with startling results. In the early stages the movement seemed to concern itself chiefly with the salvation of the individual. It has been charged against Methodism that it was morbidly individualistic. This may have been true of later developments, but the Methodist impulse contained within itself large social implications, which, indeed, Wesley himself recognized. The class meeting was the form in which the social element first manifested itself. But it was to move out into wider fields in the course of time. The influences in more recent years which have sought forcibly to conserve this particular form, as though it could be for all time a sufficient expression of the religious life, were not of the essential genius of Methodism.

It should be noted that with each historical period there was necessarily a restatement of doctrine. A new age always involves a new

theology. In the first few centuries Christian thinkers were feeling for foothold in deep waters. In the fourth century Christian thought was developing among the Greek Fathers along fairly liberal lines. Then early in the fifth century appeared what has been called, we believe with good reason, "the monstrous perversion of the Christian gospel introduced by Augustine, which has caused a black shadow to rest on the religious thought of Europe for a millennium and a half." Calvinism was a reissue of Augustinianism, and against it Wesley plied his wit, fervor, pathos, and anger. Methodism was born and reared in an atmosphere of "new-theology" controversy. In our own days the process of theological reconstruction is evidently in operation. What we should be sure of is that it is no new phenomenon. It has happened before, and may well happen again. It cannot but happen again, the gospel and humanity being what they are. *Sursum corda!* Behind all change stands One who said, and says, "Behold, I make all things new."

It may be neither possible nor politic to attempt to indicate the precise incidences of the modern orthodoxy, but it is probably safe to draw attention to some general tendencies.

Each age has had its special motive and note; what are the motive and note of ours? Especially how do we relate our thinking to the great tendencies of the past? Comparing our times with previous epochs we see that in place of the general world-hostility of the first centuries, we are aiming at a world-citizenship that proposes to capture human life for the kingdom of God. We reject the Romanist idea of a church of authority under a single human head, in favor of the idea of the church as a federation of all Christian societies in loyalty to the present Christ, and in free service for his kingdom. We cannot be satisfied with any mere acquiescence in an arbitrary election of God, with a religious life that is largely a matter of passive states of experience. We insist that religion is an activity of co-operation with God in our own salvation and in the redemption of the world. While we give full value to individual life we see that that is determined by its relation to the social whole.

Thinking still more closely and positively, we may name three principles that are influential in modern Christendom. There is the breakdown of the old distinction between the sacred and the secular; there is the definition

of holiness as wholeness or normality rather than as separation, and there is the social idea.

Now, we are only in process of assimilating these potent ideas, and a good deal of the maladjustment and ineffectiveness of these days is due to that fact. Of course every age is an age of transition, but there are stages in the recognition, assimilation, and superannuation of great conceptions. In regard to the church, the ministry, the Sabbath, and the Bible, the peculiar reverence that inhibited the ordinary methods of thought and action is giving place to a reverence based upon intelligent appreciation of the proper place of each of these in normal life. That will be, on the whole, a gain, but not without incidental losses.

Still more potent is the conception of holiness, or the standard of Christian life, as human *normality*. Most of us can remember the time when it was implicitly held that to be a Christian in any positive fashion meant having as little as possible to do with the business of the world and nothing at all with its amusements. Choice of an occupation, of a life partner, of a home locality, and such things, was supposed to be decided by

whether these would further the individual in his personal religious life, meaning by that his preparation for eternity. As against that, the conception of the religious life as making the most and the best of this world, its business, politics, art, recreations, and other interests, involves a change of immense import, which future historians will pronounce revolutionary. One hesitates to speak of the social principle, for that has made so much noise in religious circles of late years as to have become something of a nuisance. There are two aspects of it, however, that may be worth noting here. They are the modification in our thought of human guilt for sin and of the place and power of the community in personal salvation. The theological reaction against determinism went too far, and exaggerated the independence of the personal will, as though for each act having moral quality the individual was wholly and solely responsible, and as though every single act indicated a special movement of will. We see clearly that, instead of the personal life being chiefly a self-determination influenced to some extent by the environment, it is chiefly constituted by the environment, modified to some extent by the principle of self-determination. Nor

is the personal determination the less important in that it is a smaller item, but, rather, more because its exercises are so crucial.

The place of the community in the conversion of the individual has not always been recognized. Curiously, some who have manipulated it most, as the organizers of spectacular revivals, have recognized it least. Many who think of their conversion as though it were a phenomenon of their inner consciousness in isolation from the life of the group, do not realize that all the time they were reacting to potent forces in their religious environment. Some of us, as we look back, realize that, but for the interaction in and upon us of religion working through the community, the poor, weak, crude purpose that was our new-born faith would never have come into existence, much less grown to power.

Religious education as a systematic program and heroic policy has grown out of this realization of the power of the society over its developing personalities. It is a confession that so far we have never given nascent human nature a fair and full chance to show what it could become in ■ soil and atmosphere of normal religion.

Now, all these things have theological implications, which will inevitably become theological modifications. But they will do so because we are obliged to adjust our thinking to ascertained fact, and not because it is time for a new fashion in doctrine. That is to say, the changes of religious thought that are now under way are due to that general movement of the mind which tends to stress more and more the urgency of a humble willingness to see things as they are and to prosecute a courageous discipleship of reality.

THE ART OF CHRISTIAN CONTROVERSY

CONTROVERSY is a natural, necessary, productive, and beneficial activity of the human spirit. It is often prostituted to false aims and degraded by bad manners; then it becomes an evil. But the evil is in the abuse, and not in the thing itself. There will be controversy so long as there are minds quick with interest in truth, yet varied in capacity and temperament. Of course opinions will always differ; that amounts to nothing. Opinions are usually cheap and rather amusing parrot-repetitions of other men's opinions, equally worthless.

But further, men will differ in sober judgment and serious conviction, and about questions of real importance, so that one will feel acutely distressed at what he considers the perilous fallacy of the other, while the other will be burdened with grief at what he holds to be the dangerous delusion of his fellow. Men will differ thus radically over serious subjects because they are men, and not omniscient. Our partial conceptions, and

incomplete constructions, and incidental emphases, and tentative interpretations serve the need of life by leading us toward the whole of truth through a process of statement and challenge, rebuttal and justification. "God uses us to help each other so, lending our minds out." That is to say, controversy is a normal factor in the big business of life.

Religion, being an essential part of life, cannot escape controversy, neither can it fail to be enriched through controversy. Historically, however, the controversies of Christendom have furnished the most shameful chapters in that very mixed record, so that one could be excused for considering all controversy an unmitigated evil, and fleeing from it as from the plague. That would be a mistake, however, if it were possible; and, in fact, it is not possible. So what remains but that we shall do our best endeavor to make Christian controversy Christian?

I began this chapter with some notes on the "ethics" of Christian controversy. But "ethics" is an unlovely word, suggesting stern morality, the doing of one's disagreeable duty, including an incursion into the forbidding realm of philosophy. (The ordinary man has a suspicion that the philosopher takes a mean

advantage of him by withdrawing into an incomprehensible technical jargon. There's something in it too!) But the "art" of controversy—ah! that is something different. That is comparable to the sporting instinct of fair play, which would rather lose the game than win unfairly, combined with the interest in a skill that takes delight in happy exercise. Incidentally that is like the difference between Old and New Testament religion—the law and the gospel. One stands upon obligation, the other upon honor. One stresses ethics, the other æsthetics. The gospel puts manners above morals. Oh, yes, it does! And it secures morals thereby. It puts our relations with God and with our fellows on a basis of courtesy, rather than of commandments. That is the meaning of the saying that "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Gospel religion is a spiritual etiquette, not a sublimated ethic. Ethics can never be more than a postmortem inquiry into conduct, but the *noblesse oblige* of the Christian spirit is creative and regulative in the happiest and most effective way. So, if you please, let us talk about the gentle "art" of controversy, and not the austere and futile ethics thereof.

A great deal of unpleasantness in the

Christian world is caused when two persons or parties call each other names and make charges of disloyalty to the gospel, the Bible, or the Lord Jesus Christ. Christian faith is a thing so precious that it is not hard to understand men feeling keenly about anything that seems to endanger it. But educated people (I do not mean college graduates, who may, indeed, be incurably uneducated, but persons of discrimination) have no excuse for not recognizing the possibility of varied judgments about many things in connection with it, and they should be willing for every man to have the right to confess, defend, and live by his own convictions of truth. That should be so obvious that it could always be taken for granted, but, in fact, it seems not to be so. Of course by conviction I mean something more than the mere stubbornness of opinion which men often mistake for conviction. It often appears that those who are most intolerant of the convictions of others have taken their own at second-hand without examination. Nothing is worth the name of conviction but that consciousness of sovereign objective fact that comes to him who has stood bareheaded in the open air and sunlight of reality, and looked

earnestly and humbly at what is there to be seen. But if another man has looked for himself, and sees something more, something less, or something other than I see, then, though I may feel sure there is something amiss with his sight, and though I may do all I can to help him to see as I see, if he is still sure that things look different to him, he must act upon his own understanding of facts, and not on mine. I can unite with him on a basis of our common loyalty to reality, even though our understanding of reality differs. It is the loyalty that counts, and not the special interpretation.

Recognition of this has made possible Church Union, and will in the future make possible further and wider Church Union. It would make it impossible for any sectarian, whether Romanist, Baptist, Adventist, Fundamentalist, or even Modernist, to excommunicate his fellow Christian. It is, unhappily, impossible to get some Baptists, Adventists, Modernists, and Fundamentalists to see that others have intelligently and sincerely investigated the questions at issue, and have intelligently and sincerely come to different conclusions. Only if it could be shown that all who differ from us had been

afraid to examine the issues, or were resolutely resistant to the facts, would we be in a position to charge them with recalcitrancy and disloyalty.

Of course there are differences of conviction so radical that no kind of co-operation is possible. It is both logically and practically impossible for two parties to work together in the Christian campaign if one believes that it is the business of the church to realize and establish the kingdom of God on earth, and the other believes that nothing whatever can be accomplished, that even God does not expect anything to be accomplished, until the Lord returns to earth in bodily form. Naturally, Christendom, while it is in process of consolidation on the broad basis of modern evangelicalism, is also being rent afresh across the old lines on the issues of Fundamentalism and Adventism. Nevertheless, charges of disloyalty and infidelity are not in order, and cannot do other than hurt the party that makes them.

There is another elementary thing the ignoring of which makes for immense confusion, and transforms legitimate controversy into strife. Quite good and sincere people often slip into the error of asserting as fact

what they do not positively know to be fact, but which they assume to be true because they think that on the basis of their beliefs it *ought* to be true. Why cannot good people realize that the truth of religion needs no adventitious propping, and that any attempt to assist it by assertions of which we are not sure can only succeed in bringing discredit upon ourselves and injury to religion?

A little while ago I was besought to peruse a copy of a publication devoted to vigorous opposition to Romanism. I found in it a paragraph in which the writer jeered at some Roman dignitary who had expressed his love for all peoples of all faiths, and declared for a mighty cosmopolitan idea of Christianity, in which all alike should be recognized as brothers in Christ and fellow workers in the kingdom of grace. The writer's pronouncement upon that was, "That Roman prelate did not mean one word of that out of his soul." Now, it is within the bounds of possibility that the Roman prelate was deliberately false, and lied outrageously. But even if it were, in fact, so, the writer could not *know* that, and his positive statement amounted to a positive lie. I dropped the publication with disgust; then, on second

thoughts, I cut out and filed the paragraph as a striking illustration of this particular logical fallacy and spiritual misdemeanor. There can be no greater disservice to the cause of truth than to try to propagate it by such means. A method that would be howled off a football field by the partisans of both sides can have no place in discussion between followers of the Lord Jesus.

The most pernicious form of lie is not that in which one states as true what he knows to be false: it is that in which one states as true what he has not sufficient ground for knowing assuredly to be true. That is why the scholar, the man of trained judgment, appears so often irritatingly hesitant, where the common man is apt to be positive. That is why the zealous ignorant, or still more, the fanatically half-informed, have an advantage over the man who has given a lifetime to concentrated study. The scholar knows how many things there are about which one can speak with only a measure of probability. He knows that there are varying judgments held by men of competence and ability. He declares his own conviction with clarity and precision, avoiding overstatement, making allowances, refusing to be positive where posi-

tiveness is unjustified, striking a balance of probability. Then he is free to speak with weight upon the things that are certain.

It is very seldom that argumentation ever succeeds in changing the belief of one or other of the arguers, at least at the time of the debate. I suppose I have done my share of what I hope was good-natured and earnest discussion over serious themes, principally religious. But I remember only one occasion when I was ever able to push a man to the wall and crowd him into a corner, so that he actually and formally capitulated on the spot. But then my friend happened to be a man of quite extraordinary sincerity and perspicuity. In most cases one has to be satisfied with making a creditable demonstration of his case, and sufficient objection to the other side, so as to be able to withdraw peaceably, "call it a day," and sign an honorable truce.

Of course there should be no reason in the nature of things why two persons should not come to agreement on any ordinary subject, given some notion of what constitutes a valid argument, fair capacity to use words, and adequate information on both sides. We cannot for a moment admit the implication of Pilate's "What is truth?" namely, that our

differences of opinion indicate the hopelessness of the quest. Argumentative deadlocks prove the inadequacy of our powers, not the essential inaccessibility of truth. But what I wish to say is this, that in most cases where argumentation breaks down, one may notice a curious kind of trigonometry at work. In the mind of one or other of the disputants, or of both, there has been a third term, often unconsciously, besides that which was affirmed and that which was denied, which yet affected the varying judgments. Thus the Fundamentalists object to evolution because he feels, more or less consciously, that it would involve the recasting of his theory of inspiration. So he is unable to consider the case for evolution, or the case for the modern conception of the Bible, on their merits. I have noticed this phenomenon so often that now I make it my primary aim whenever I find it necessary to prosecute an argument, to spare no pains to find out, if I can, not only what my adversary means by the terms he uses, but also what lies in the background of his thinking, unrealized perhaps by himself.

In the debates of young people, and even with old and seasoned persons, one often

finds the tendency to special pleading, the resolute endeavor to make the worst of the other side, to ignore whatever might count for the opponent's case, and generally to *pianissimo* the other side while *double-forte*-ing one's own. Now, that is in itself a confession of weakness and a tactical blunder. Far better is it, from the point of view of the honor of the debate, and still more from that of argumentative effectiveness, to concede everything that can be said for the other side, even straining a point in its favor. It is still better tactics if one can unearth some consideration which the opponent never knew, and make him a present of it; and *then* in addition, and notwithstanding, and nevertheless, and in spite of all, to show that one's own contention is the larger, completer, and so truer statement of truth, including rather than contradicting the case of the other side. I remember one public debate in which one party was reduced to helpless, stuttering confusion, because the others stated their opponents' case for them with friendly thoroughness, so that there was nothing left for them to do but repeat it, and then used it, as it were, to stand on while they reached up to their own arguments.

I doubt whether the study of formal logic is of much advantage as a preparation for practical debate, except as furnishing a hard and gritty bone upon which to sharpen one's dialectical teeth. But for that, any stiff subject making mental demands upon the student would serve equally well. It is, however, decidedly useful to be able to recognize the common fallacies and to know just why they are fallacious. If some technical knowledge of the principles of the syllogism is needed for this last, that is so much in favor of giving time to this very unattractive subject. Most bad arguments that amount to more than a confusion of words discover themselves to be variants of two forms of fallacy, namely, false consequence and false antithesis. The first supposes that because one thing follows another in time, there must be a causal relation between them. This is the unconscious basis of all the superstitions. The second forgets that to deny some given quality in a given thing is not the same as to affirm the opposite quality. It confuses the contrary with the contradictory and ignores the fact that between opposites there are many gradations, and that apparently incompatible qualities are not seldom predicable of

the same thing in this queer world. Just a whisper in your ear: the real reason why one should know the common fallacies is not that he may be able to trip up his opponent neatly and with dispatch but that he may be able to eliminate them from his own thinking and speaking!

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

WHAT an impressive case the pessimist had during the glacial period, assuming that human beings existed at that time, and were sufficiently civilized to have acquired the habit of pessimism! It must have appeared settled and assured that this old earth was rapidly (geologically speaking) perishing of the fate which had already befallen the moon, that the vivifying solar heat was being withdrawn, and that all things were declining into an eternal frozen death. A primeval Mark Tapley might have found satisfaction in the opportunity of being most creditably jolly in view of so dismal a prospect. The climate of this North America had become what the climate of Greenland is now. Only a few short millenniums and this would be another dead world, locked in a casket of ice. But our suppositious pessimists would have been as mistaken then as they have usually been since. The freezing process did not proceed to its logical conclusion. The ice-age was, as the event showed, not a fate inexorably fulfilling itself, but a tide that turned. The

creeping ice-cap halted its southward course, fluctuated through several ages, then steadily retreated northwards to its present limits, and our planet took another lease of life. Just what was the initial cause of the ice-age, and further, what halted the freezing process and turned the tide, remains a puzzle over which learned men theorize to their own great satisfaction and the pained amusement of other learned men.

Something not unlike that happened in the course of Christian history also. After the triumphs of the primitive church in the first three centuries, what a miserable frost settled upon Christendom! The pristine glow of the disciple spirit departed, the clarity of faith became confusion of belief, the simplicity of worship deteriorated into ritual pomp, as men lost the gospel vision. That religious ice-age lasted, with fluctuations like those of the geological glacial period, for a thousand years. Christianity seemed to have gone the way of all lesser religions from a beginning in purity and truth into a senility of corruption, complication, and superstition. Christians had apparently betrayed their trust as effectively as the chosen people betrayed their covenant with Jehovah. Human

wisdom staggers at the courage of God in committing so great an issue as religion to such inadequate instruments as men! Even the Reformation, which released again the saving dynamic of the gospel, turned its new-found liberty into a pestilent dogmatic license, and Protestantism turned and rent itself in controversy until there bid fair to become as many sects as individuals.

It is no use blinding ourselves to the fact that cynical critics of Christianity have an at least arguable case when they charge it with futility. "Here," they say, "is a universal gospel, created by the Incarnated Son of God, sealed by his resurrection from the dead, re-enforced by the presence and energy of the very Spirit of God, and what is its record of accomplishment through nineteen hundred years?" We cannot take refuge in any recital of noble lives, characters, and accomplishments, or benevolent institutions and ameliorative movements; for all these must be set against the background of the actual undertaking of the gospel, which is something immensely greater than all these. We can only justify our continued faith by courageously facing the challenge of this situation. If we pass by with averted minds, we may pre-

serve a cheap and easy belief, but we cannot save an effective faith.

There has been a real futility in historic Christendom, and we may as well admit it. Why it should have been possible is part of the greater problem of why God chose to let man learn by his mistakes and failures. That is beyond our solution; we find help, if not explanation, in the fact that moral virtues and spiritual qualities can come into being in no other way.

When our attention once focuses upon the subject, how fantastically incredible it becomes that we should for so long have been content with a Christendom split into a multitude of warring, suspicious, or merely independent sects! So long as men thought God only proposed to cull a given number of elect souls for salvation from a hopeless race, it was possible to believe that the members of a given sect might constitute the redeemed, or on a broader basis, that each church might add its quota to the ransomed host. But we have in these latter days been recovering that large and essential principle of the kingdom of God. We see that Jesus did really propose to himself to secure the redemption of humanity as such. It is in the light of this

recovered principle that we see the import of our Lord's prayer, "That they may all be one . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." A host of conflicting creeds and ecclesiasticisms might, in independence and mutual hostility, justify their existence as serving the varied temperaments of men and races, by providing suitably varied emotional satisfactions. But if ever the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdom of our Lord, it can come about only through the work and witness of a united Christendom.

But see what a marvel is happening before our eyes! In truth, to see the marvel one needs some acquaintance with the course of church history. Otherwise he is apt to look upon the fact and miss its startling and heartening significance. There is a definite and radical change in the spirit of the scene. The tide has turned and the current has set in a new direction. Never again can things be the same with us. Some subtle alchemy is at work disintegrating barriers that had proved themselves invincible. A miracle is happening. The same that said, "Let there be light!" and light was; he is abroad in our midst. This is a veritable Day of the Lord,

and of the coming of the Son of man. Long have good people been praying to God to "revive his work," and "make bare his arm." Many have been specifying to God just how he should do this. They have required him to repeat himself in recurring periods of religious emotionalism. Because God does not repeat himself they have looked upon his actual operation with blind eyes, or, alas! have resisted it and blasphemed it as evil. Who would see God at work must needs have the clarity of vision that comes only from a peculiar humbleness and teachableness of spirit.

But let us realize that this is actually a work of God. Somehow religion has been proceeding under a dim feeling that God was far away, and faith has hung on desperately in the absence of any sign and token of his presence. That was a grievous mistake. How greatly Christendom *needs* the thrill of awe of the rediscovery of God's presence and operation in our midst! That is one thing that comes to us from an attentive consideration of this momentous fact of organic Church Union as we have witnessed it in Canada.

There is another, equally significant and encouraging. This miracle was not wrought

by fiat apart from the regular processes of human life—if, indeed, there ever was a miracle wrought in that way. God did it, for no one but God could have brought it to pass. But he did it, not in spite of, but *through* the laws and processes that constitute our life. There was a proximate and effective cause for this epochal change. In this respect the analogy does not hold with the change that broke up the ice-age, that it is not difficult to see what the cause was. Church Union as a movement and a fact is a product of the modern mind in the sphere of religion. So the modern mind is not an atmosphere inimical to religion, but a leading of the Spirit of God. He is not only at work among us, but he is at work in that form of activity which is most characteristic and necessary in our life. Therefore let us lift up our hearts and our eyes and go forward unafraid.

That it is the modern mind which has caused the turn of the tide is testified to in an interesting quarter, by those who most energetically detest it in all its workings. The injection of the fundamentalist controversy into the agitation against union was shocking in its irrelevancy, but it was highly significant nevertheless. Some of the bitterest

things said against union were uttered by those who personally had nothing whatever to do with it, but who realized instinctively that their prepossessions were challenged by it. They were at once logically correct and completely wrong. (What imposing and beautiful structures of logical thought can be built upon false premises!) If by its fruits we may know it, then the modern mind has recently acquired a remarkable testimonial to its soundness. It was natural and inevitable that those who dislike the modern mind should recoil from the idea of Church Union.

But, of course, we are using what is in danger of becoming a cant term, and stands in need of examination. The "modern mind" is not modern, nor is it a "mind" in the sense of a body of ideas, system of laws, or set of special principles. It is at least as old as the Renaissance. Pity indeed, that the Renaissance and the Reformation did not proceed as one movement, seeing that in the providence of God the first made the second possible! It is only in our own days that the two are fusing, and the result is what we call the modern mind. Think it out, and you will see that it is so. Again, the modern mind is not any particular idea, or theory, or philosophy. It

is a new and courageous loyalty to reality, that subordinates our own prepossessions in the willingness to let truth be what it really is, sure that it must be better and truer than our best desire. It is the only fundamentalism that has any right to the name, for it insists upon going behind tradition, and beneath prejudice, custom, and inclination, to the ultimate sources in life, history, nature, the Bible, and experience.

The difference between this method of approach and any other mental attitude is subtle but very potent. The older philosophies and theologies and the pseudo-sciences started out with an idea to prove, and selected the facts that served, while ignoring or denying those that would not fit. That is the only possible explanation of the absurd and discreditable fact that men, using precisely the same Scriptures, constructed and defended from them such incompatible systems as Calvinism and Arminianism. Well, the same method which among the sciences discarded astrology and alchemy, replacing them with astronomy and chemistry, in the religious sphere has given us the historical principle in Bible study. Of course, if the hypothesis of evolution, the historical principle in biblical

interpretation, or the electric theory of matter, were all disproved to-morrow, that would make no difference to the modern mind. For these provisional principles could be upset only by a more thorough loyalty to reality, that is to say, by a more effective exercise of the modern mind itself.

Let us think straight and clear our minds of misconception. The modern mind is not rationalistic. Rationalism is the heresy of intellect, the stupidity of the clever man who makes the blunder of confounding the scales with the weights, of supposing reason to be itself a criterion of truth, rather than the instrument of observation and comparison. The modern mind and rationalism are contradictions one of the other. Rationalism would preclude every new scientific discovery that alters our conceptions, as it has resisted the recognition of all such in the past. But the modern mind says with Faraday, "Nothing is too wonderful to be true," while it proceeds to ask whether it can *show* itself to be true. At the same time the modern mind says with Huxley that a man should not "say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe." Between those two statements religious faith

finds perfect liberty and justification and guarantee.

It is this new spirit that broke down the Jericho walls between the churches that have united here in Canada. Nay! That figure will not do. For no old allegiance has been forsworn and no loved association forsaken. What has happened to make organic union possible has been that as men turned afresh to fundamental realities they found themselves on a higher level, from which they could recognize their separate domains as foothills of the same mountain. On the same basis of theological and ecclesiastical loyalties Christendom had reached a deadlock of controversy, and might have remained at that point till the crack of doom. Nothing but a new method of approach could have liberated the Christian mind, and set the churches free to take up afresh the task of building the New Jerusalem in the life of mankind.

What we have seen happen in this country is but a beginning and a promise. But it is also the launching of a process that must go on while God exists, for it is the leading of his Spirit. Therefore let us lift up our hearts and be glad. Let us *enjoy* this freedom where-with Christ has made us free. God is among

us working great marvels. And the light by which we live is not darkness, neither an *ignis fatuus* luring to destruction, but the gleam of very truth. Courage then! Faces toward the dawn, and forward!

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